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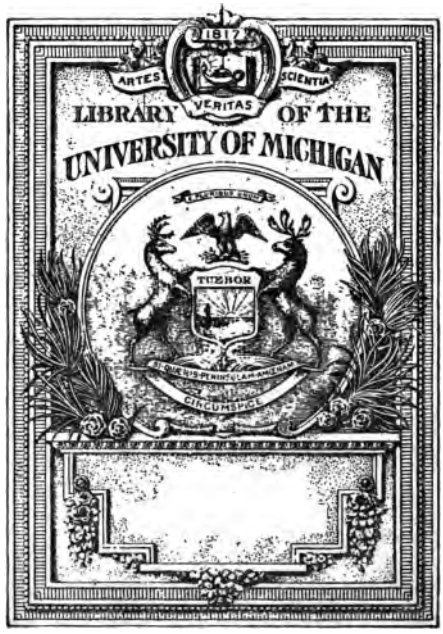
THE MEXICAN MIND

WALLACE THOMPSON



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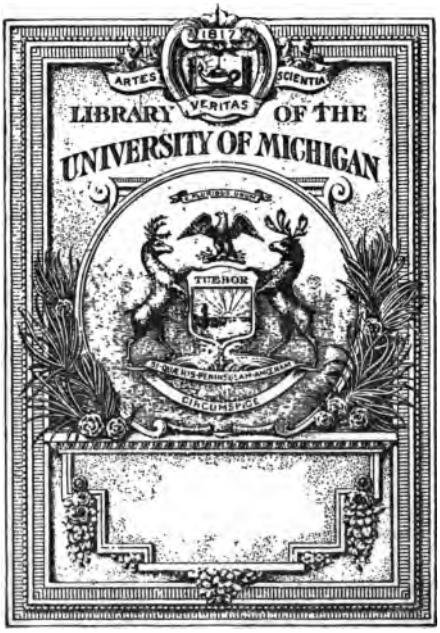

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THE MEXICAN MIND

By Wallace Thompson

The People of Mexico

Trading With Mexico

The Mexican Mind

THE MEXICAN MIND

A Study of National Psychology

By
WALLACE THOMPSON

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1922

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Gift
Wright Library

To

My Mother

FANNIE GEIGER THOMPSON

Who made the living of life, the loving of my fellow-man,
and the understanding of both, the polestar
of my growing years

PREFACE

TO its observation of Mexico the world has brought almost every element of illumination save one,—and that the most essential of all. It has neglected the universal touchstone of understanding, older than Solomon; the dictum that "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Neither in our writings upon Mexico nor in our practical dealings with the Mexicans, have we sought out the fountainhead of all their action and of all their failure,—the Mexican mind itself. Here, first and last, has been our basic error of approach, the wreck of all our desires to help or to use the Mexicans.

The book which is offered here seeks to remedy, in part, this error of the past and to give a ground which may help to obviate its repetition in the future. Here is a humble beginning of a study to which many minds and many years should be devoted,—the clarifying of the mutual understanding of the Latin and the Saxon peoples of the Western Hemisphere by a frank comparison of the workings of their minds.

Of all those who have written of Mexico, or indeed of any part of Latin America, not one has taken up the vital problem of psychology in any

but the most incidental way. Thus this book is based upon no source material; it has no "authorities"—save the standard works on general psychology and the stories and illustrations, which have been taken wherever they could be found.

Only my own previous book, "The People of Mexico," [1] may perhaps be regarded as the source book of the present volume. However, although "The Mexican Mind" is in a way the third of a trilogy of studies (the first two being comprised in the two sections of "The People of Mexico, Who They Are and How They Live"), it is no more closely related to my previous Mexican book than it would be to a similar work by some other author, —if such a book existed. There, as here, I sailed forth on uncharted seas; and here, as there, I hope only that such light as I have been able to throw upon the course will serve to guide those whose sailing must ultimately be the hope of Mexico.

The generous welcome which the critics and the public accorded "The People of Mexico" brought forth but one serious criticism, and that was of failure to delineate a solution for the difficulties which were described. And yet there has always been but one solution,—the education of the Mexican mass. All else is but subterfuge and momentary relief. The details of that educational solution which I have now set forth in this book required, for their understanding, an exposition of Mexican character. Here, then, is that exposition, and with

[1] "The People of Mexico," Harper & Brothers, New York, 1921.

it my suggestions of the fundamental bases upon which Mexican education must be founded. I hope and pray that in some way and some time, ere many years have passed, they, or a development of them, will be applied. I can see no other hope for a country which I have long loved and to whose service all my Mexican books have been dedicated.

I can, as I say, credit no source material for what has been written on these pages. But much aid has come to me, in consultation with many friends who know Mexico well, in the suggestions of unexplained incidents in many travel books and in such reports as have come to my hands.

Of the many others directly and indirectly contributing to the book, I want to speak first of my old master, Doctor Daniel Moses Fisk, Professor of Sociology in Washburn College, whose teachings these many years ago laid the foundations for both of these efforts of mine. Truly, if ever man were the grandfather of books, he bears that designation here.

A word of tribute must go to all those Mexican friends whose grave and delightful minds have added so much of inspiration (and a word of regret when I re-read what I have had of necessity to say of their people); and of these friends, especially to one, Doctor Toribio Esquivel Obregon, a gentleman of the most courtly school, and a student of inviting learning.

Of personal appreciation there is one word: to my wife, Marian Gilhooly Thompson, who to all my books on Mexico has brought not only the

wealth of her own observations of the Mexicans and of the other peoples of Latin America, but also the intuition and understanding which has smoothed the rough places and clarified my own ideas.

WALLACE THOMPSON.

NEW YORK, *December 1, 1921.*

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THE MEXICAN MIND

THE MEXICAN MIND

CHAPTER I

THE STREAMS OF RACE

TWO great streams have come down from immemorial time to the making of the Mexican mind, as they have come to the making of the Mexican nation. These are the streams of two races, white and red, races which in mind and in living were as far apart as the globe which separated them.

The red stream, moving along through ages before the white appeared, had become, ere the meeting, an ocean which covered two continents. It was into that ocean that the blood of the white stream poured in the two great rivers which swept westward from North and South Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the north our Anglo-Saxon river pushed back the red, building a wall, a dike, which we advanced by slow years ever westward, inclosing those pools of red we left behind us, but never mingling. But in the South, Spain poured her blood and culture and civilization into the red sea, softening its menacing color and

crying joyfully in triumph when, here or there, a pool paled to European purity. Through three centuries this mingling went on, and in Mexico the blood of three hundred thousand white men was poured into the sea of six million red men to the making of what they called a new race, the mestizo, or mixed breed.

Those white men of the heroic age felt, perhaps, that they were contributing chiefly their blood to the great mixture, but they gave far more. They gave the language of Latin culture. They built a civilization of great churches and stately palaces and broad, square-lying towns. They gave a social and political system essentially Spanish and a religion which raised the Cross above an area that, with South America, was vaster than all the Cross had ever shone upon before. They built a principality of wealth and power and culture and pressed down upon the Indian population a domination of ideas which seemed to mark the land for Spain and the Church forever.

Then came that strange sweep of freedom which was first an idea in the Europe of the late eighteenth century and was next a pulsing reality in that mighty outpost of England which lay between Boston and Roanoke. The sweep of that freedom turned southward, and then Mexico and one by one each and all of the Americas fell beneath the sway, not perhaps of the idea, but of the fact, and kings tottered on their thrones and colonies became independent empires. The white man of Northern America became his own king, for the

ideas of freedom were deep in his heart. He and he alone fought the battles which were in reality but a single battle in the long war which had begun at Runnymede.

But the white man of the South, the Spaniard, who for three centuries had bred his blood into the soil, raising up his creole[1] and mestizo sons to carry on the torch, fled back to Europe before the storm, and the mestizos and their Indian brothers became the "Washingtons" and "Jeffersons" and "Hamiltons" and "Lafayettes" of their revolutions. Red man turned against white, and for fifty years blood flowed like water in every land from Florida to Patagonia. Then here and there arose great men, and especially, in Mexico, one great man, Porfirio Diaz, a half-blood Indian, but by some strange prank of heredity, a white man in mind and soul.

Diaz rallied round him that pitiful handful of the white Mexicans who remained, the native-born creoles, and with them those half-blood Mexicans in whom the Spanish strain was predominant in culture and in their ways of thinking. They built them a republic that was an autocracy and under

[1] In Mexico the term "creole" is used to signify definitely the pure-blood, white descendants of Europeans, most of them Spaniards. The term "mestizo" now applies to all mixed Indian and white blood peoples, whatever the proportion of the mixture. The word "creole" has rather differing meanings in South America and also in the United States. The Mexican use, which is followed here, is supported by the Spanish Academy, with this further limitation that by the literal Academy definition negroes of pure African blood are also creoles.

their sway Mexico again became an outpost of the white world in Latin America, paralleling in many ways the white lands of Chile, Argentine, and Uruguay, far to the south in the temperate zone, the home land of the white man.

Under Diaz, European culture became predominant, as it had been in the days of the Spanish viceroys, and the mind, the culture of the red man were buried once more, buried and all but forgotten in the centers of government and learning. Upward through that crust of foreign culture there pushed, here and there, a mestizo and, at long intervals, an Indian, achieving the miracle of adaptation along ways ill suited to their strange Indian psychologies. Thus some reached, at last, to the light of the white world, up walls less scalable, in many ways, than those which still shut the American negro from the heights of our civilization.

But millions of the Mexicans, mixed blood and Indian, remained red, and red they are to this day, and red they have shown themselves to all the world for these past ten bloody years. They do not dress in war paint and their tomahawks are great long corn knives which readily disembowel their adversaries but do not lend themselves to the more gentle art of scalp-taking. But Indian they are and to-day, behind the flimsy curtain of their Spanish language and religion, behind the tattered, flapping blinds of what was once a copy of the American Federal Constitution, behind the blatant Marseillaise of modern socialism, they leap in savage war dances and look forward to the day when

Indian communism (not Marxian socialism) shall rule, when the white man with his mines and oil wells shall be forgotten and Indian demagogues and Indian priests shall rule their ways and their thoughts.

That Indian culture, if we may so use the term, is perhaps the most sinister threat against the civilization of the white man which exists in the world to-day. Its strength is in its inertia; its threat is in the fact that to-day it is the dominating factor in the political and social life of Mexico, the keystone nation of Latin America. That that threat is no mere nightmare the past ten years of Mexican history may prove to us. Its danger is the greater in the fact that the white man of Europe and America finds it so difficult to believe that there is even the possibility of this reversion. Our pride in our culture, our faith in the subtle power and lasting force of the environment which our Spanish brothers created in Latin America is so great that we are prone to consider the Indian only as a smaller brother and not as a grown man capable at least of bearing arms and of dying for the things which are ingrained in his soul.

Brothers indeed we may be before Heaven, but the Indian differs from the white man in qualities more fundamental than mere variation in ideas and in the ages of their cultures. White and red were, and to-day indeed still are, farther apart than any, even yellow and black, in the processes of their thoughts and in the ideals of what is worth living for and what is worth dying for.

Although we may feel far away and distant from the negro, because centuries of civilization separate us, the distance seems somehow only that of cultural ages, and the mind of the black man and the mind of the white man follow the same road. The brown man of the Mediterranean seems to speak our language, and his culture and ours are one. Even the yellow Oriental thinks as we think, and we misunderstand him chiefly because he does not let us see his mind, because ever is that cloud of imperturbable, age-old silence of voice and facial muscle which we do not penetrate. But the red man, with a lesser cunning than the yellow, with a mask of apparent dullness and stupidity, baffles us by his very simplicity. We may know the illogical sequence of his thoughts, we may plumb his philosophy till its childishness lies plain before us, but still he travels a road which is more than the mere path behind us, which apparently swings in orbits which know not the planes and verticals and ellipses that are ours. East and West may lie far asunder, but they meet indeed before the throne of common virtues; West and East alike stumble to incoherence before the enigma of the Apache, the Aztec, the Maya, and the Inca.

To-day the white world stands as it has stood since Columbus first planted the Cross on the Island of San Salvador, aloof and afar from those planes of Indian psychology. But, verily, the day is pressing upon us, and it behooves us to take ourselves out of the safe shelter of our Abbey walls, where for our thousand years we have sat in judgment upon

the world, and to find that Indian plane, and, finding it, to know it and understand it. Thus and thus only will we achieve the civilizing of Latin America and in that civilizing the saving of white culture in the western hemisphere and perhaps, indeed, in all the world.

At our hand is Mexico, sick unto death, and because of her very illness with her symptoms and the processes of her thoughts more open than they have ever been to the white man. The way of our search here plunges into the untracked jungle of Indian and Mexican psychology, a forest into whose depths no foreigner has ever penetrated. Into it we must go, because only when we have passed beyond its edges and glimpsed (even if we only glimpse) its massive trunks, its bogs, and its twining, crippling vines, its poisonous, exotic flowers, its noxious insects and its savage beasts, shall we begin to understand the problems which we actually face or begin to approach to their solution.

In that jungle we shall find not only the old, primeval growths of Indianism unchanged through the four centuries of white rule, but we shall find also trees and plants and grasses of transplanted Spanish ideals, distorted and adapted by their new environment into forms which we shall hardly recognize, with roots steeped in the rotting atavism of the untold millenniums of Indian history.

The Mexico of to-day is root and stem of this ancient jungle. The very physical make-up of the population harks back to it. The six million Indians

of the fifteen million of the Mexican people are in many ways more Indian than the reservation tribes of the United States. Of the eight million mestizos or mixed bloods, probably two-thirds are Indian in physical type and in spiritual and mental temperament. Nearly twelve million Indian minds in fifteen million! A vast subsoil whose mere existence is the most illuminating fact in Mexican life, be the observer psychologist, politician, soldier, or a tradesman seeking new markets.

Descended, during unrecorded æons, either through evolutionary processes from the animal life of the very land in which they now live, or wanderers from distant cradles of humanity of which they have no tradition, the Indians of Mexico, as of all America, remain one of the unique racial problems of science. Their historical and psychological problems, as well, still baffle our attempts at measuring them by our own scientific yardsticks.

In the period of their life which we know, the Mexican Indians, like all the peoples of history, have had the experience of being conquered and dominated culturally by men of alien races and higher civilization. But in exception to most others, they have not and do not now show any sign of the growing mentality, broader group-consciousness, improved moral and intellectual adaptability which have marked other conquered peoples in the five thousand years of recorded history.

They remain much the same peoples as they were when the Spaniards came, little changed by white rule, essentially barbaric in their modes of thought

and in the values which they place upon the factors of their life. Like the Indians of old time, the Indians of to-day desire nothing so much as to be left alone, and the one thing which they fight for is to be left to themselves and to their primeval communal life. Spain discovered early that the easiest way to rule the Indians was to leave the communes to themselves, and to allow their only contact to be with the paternal Church and the paternal landlord. The viceroys early adopted this easiest way, with effects of which we are only to-day reaping the full fruits.

This first and most significant surrender to Indianism by the Spaniards was virtually a re-beginning of the European feudal system both for the Indians and for their conquerors. The feudal age was dead in Europe when Columbus sailed, almost as dead in Spain as in England. But the feudal stage of Indian development was not yet passed, and so, in the surrender to Indian demands, feudalism was revived in Latin America, and that far less because of Spanish cupidity than because of the immovable mountain of Indian tradition and the inertia of Indian psychology.

Thus, in the beginning, the Indian failed in meeting his great crisis,—the crisis of his adaptation to the higher culture which Spain offered him. In his winning the right to continue his communal life he carried on to future generations the consequences of his failure to meet his new conditions. That failure has been repeated age after age and by government after government, and the crisis of Indian

adaptation to the white civilization which has pressed upon him has come down to our own day. It is that crisis which faces the white Mexican and through him all the white world to-day. For the crisis of Mexico is essentially this crisis of the Indian, due to his failure, again, in the past decade, to meet the crisis of government which has been thrown into his hands by the machinations of mixed-breed agitators.

The problem is essentially psychological and essentially one which, because of the failures and neglect of the mestizos and of the Indians, the white world must meet and solve. It therefore behooves us to dig deep into its psychological bases as well as into its historical antecedents.

Aside from the blame which might attach to the Spaniards as a colonizing and civilizing power, aside from the fact that the racial amalgamation of peoples of such different and distant stocks inevitably produces a lower mixed type, less capable than either of the parent races to meet crises, there remain certain definite elements of Indian psychology and social organization which stand out menacingly in the Indian history of the past and in the Mexican history of the present.

The first of these is that never since the fall of Spanish rule has the scepter of vital power been long out of the grasp of the Indian mass. This power, animal in its beginnings, and animal in most of its manifestations, has owed its control to the numerical predominance of the Indian type in the population, to the dominance of Indian phys-

ical and mental traits in the mass of the mestizos and to the greater adaptability of the Indian to climatic and food conditions.

The second important element is the fact that the strivings, the "ideals" of the Indian are not, as our sentimentality would lead us to believe, toward democracy and that freedom which we find a need of our own souls, but toward the primal communism which has come down, virtually unchanged, from pre-Spanish times, and toward a liberty that is license, without limit or inhibition.

This Mexican communism is unique, distinguished from other communal organizations in history by an almost complete absence of communal responsibility. A system of common ownership of land and other property has existed from the legendary era of Mexico down to the modern days of Carranza and Obregon. But where in other lands with similar communal ideas the sense of responsibility on the part of the commune for the acts of its members has been a great controlling and educative force, in Mexico there has been virtually no such restraint. Normally, the kin or clan takes upon itself matters of discipline and control, and offenses of any sort against the tribal code are punished severely. Not the least onerous of its punishments has always been, from Africa to Greenland, banishment or expulsion from the group, a sentence which in the kin organizations of all time has meant social death, for no other kin will receive a pariah.

To-day in Mexico there are no signs of any such

communal responsibility, and, despite the search of many delvers into ancient tradition, it is much more likely that communal responsibility never existed than that it has been outgrown. Savage life in Mexico has always been easy. Expulsion from the kin relationship has carried no perils of lack of food and very little danger from wild beasts. The pariah was always able to find his way through friendly jungles, to live in his own corn patch and to make him a new kin of his own. The communism of prehistoric Mexico, like that of to-day, apparently had no other effect on the people than to drown individual initiative and in that drowning to sink even the initiative and responsibility of the clan itself.

This effect of the peculiar communism of the Mexican Indian is itself responsible for the third basic fact of Indian psychology, the love of and mastery by leaders and personalities. Shirking responsibility, the Indian sought ever to find for himself masters who would assume it. Before the conquest he had been a slave to his self-appointed priests and princes, and went to war at the caprice and behests of his rulers. In Spanish days he offered himself as a weapon and as a tool to the tyrannies which the situation nurtured and developed from the human selfishness of his new masters.

This Indian tendency toward irresponsible communism, and this Indian willingness to shift every responsibility to the shoulders of any leader, combine to perpetuate and to explain the intellectual domination of the Spanish element in the outward

appearances of the Mexico which we have known. This Spanish influence has sought, through all the years and all the changing governments of Mexico, to destroy Indianism by the expedient of replacing tribal and kin relationships with a white national ideal. This effort has failed with equal continuity, and the root of its failure we find, again, in a psychological condition which is basically racial.

Humanity, in developing from communes and savage tribes into nations of self-conscious individuals, has always passed through the great moment when the ancient customs and superstitions have been codified into firm and workable law, with practical provisions for change and amendment. Until that moment comes, the ægis of tradition is the heaviest of burdens and the most rigid of tyrannies, for uncodified tradition chains a people with unwritten laws as immutable as those of Nature herself. And no nation can ever develop or ever be solidly founded unless its nationality is a growth of its natural and racial heritages.

Thus we reach the branching point of Mexico's political confusion and of much of her psychological chaos. The codes and laws under which she lived during the three centuries of Spanish rule and upon which she built her independence were not the codified traditions of the mass of her people, but those which had been brought ready-made from Spain. They had been impressed upon the Indians without adaptation and virtually without their absorbing a single one of the dominant traditions of the native races.

Nor did this idea of imposing a foreign code end with the effort to make Mexico Spanish. It has continued through all her independent history, first with an imitation of the constitution and system—the code—of the United States, then with borrowings from France, and most recently with a ready-made socialistic constitution, code, and philosophy, presented to the Mexican people by foreigners who knew little of their past and were oblivious even to the struggle of the moment between entrenched Indian tradition and the cumulative cycle of foreign imitations.

Always there has been, on the part of the more intelligent Mexicans, a realization—not always concrete—of this eternal battle in the Indian and mestizo mind. The Spaniard sought to eliminate the conflict by making Mexico white through racial amalgamation—a plan whose failure to-day is virtually complete.

Since Spanish times all effort toward harmonizing the two elements has been undertaken on the principle that the Indian, as the lower race, must and would ultimately climb to the plane of his more advanced brother. This idea has enthroned two elements, the theorists who have sought to find newer and more beautiful systems of democracy, and the demagogues, who have raised up Indian armies, one after the other, by promising, each and all, the same surrender to Indian tradition and to Indian love of loot and of communism as the price of Indian support. This linking of theory and demagogy is the condition which we see to-day,

and have seen through the century of Mexico's independence.

Increasingly, however, the need of a new method has become apparent. We have now reached, through slow evolution in our educational systems, a realization that the duty is upon the wiser brother to stoop and lift, rather than upon the lower to climb through his handicaps to the higher plane. In the United States the years since the close of the Great War have seen the development of a new system of reaching the immigrant problem. This system is called Americanization. Its working principle is the seeking out, in the unassimilated immigrant, of those national or racial traits and traditions which can best be adapted to serve and be served by American institutions, and upon those traits to build both the adaptation of the immigrant himself and a broadening of the usefulness and adaptability of American institutions. This temporary surrender of American ideals may not appeal to all of us, but it gives an illuminating analogy. Mexico's great problem is not unlike this problem of the United States, differing chiefly in that Mexico's unassimilated population has long lived within her own borders. In other words, the problem of Mexico is the problem of the Mexicanization of the Indian mass.

This idea was first expressed in 1916 by a young Mexican archæologist of the Madero revolutionary group, Manuel Gamio. His book, which he called "Forging the Fatherland", may well mark the point of departure toward a true understanding of

the whole Mexican problem as a psychological and racial issue. In this book he has written:

> Contemporary European civilization has not been able to filter into our indigenous population for two principal causes; first, by reason of the natural resistance which this population offers to change of culture; and second, because we are ignorant of the reasons of this resistance. We do not know how the Indian thinks; we do not know his true aspirations; we prejudge him according to our criteria when we ought to saturate ourselves with his own point of view in order to understand it. Temporarily we must be able to create an indigenous soul; then we may labor for the advancement of the indigenous population. Such a task is not the duty of the governor, pedagogue or sociologist, but of the anthropologist, particularly the ethnologist, whose apostleship requires not only wisdom and abnegation, but especially does it require an orientation and a point of view which are beyond prejudice. . . . The Indian will continue in a pre-Hispanic culture until he is gradually brought into contemporary civilization. The attempt to do this by teaching him religion, clothing him and teaching him the alphabet has not got under the skin; the soul and body of the Indian are still pre-Hispanic. We cannot Europeanize the Indian at one stroke; we should rather Indianize ourselves a little to assist in the rapproachment.[1]

This is but the suggestion of a way, but great though it be or small though it be, such an attitude is itself the most vitally necessary element in the solution that must appear.

For the Indian has come to be a world question and he will be considered more and more, for the problems of this globe will not be solved without

[1] Manuel Gamio, "Forjando Patria," Mexico, 1910, page 40.

him. To-day he sits with his tattered Spanish cloak of government about him, upon the richest of all the unopened lands of the world, an area which can support a thousand million souls, and will yet support them. Of what nature those thousand millions are to be is the question that faces, not the Indians who possess the lands and may indeed become a people capable and worthy of developing their heritage, but us, the whites of Latin America, of the United States, of Europe.

The problem concerns us, as life itself concerns us. For the problem is this: that the trend of the mightier forces in human affairs is turning toward a clearer separation of the white world from the yellow, perhaps from the brown world and the black. And between them all is the red, the world wherein lie the greatest future fields of development upon this planet. Until to-day we, the Anglo-Saxons, through the great English republic in the north of the Americas, have kept the whole of the red lands of that hemisphere for the whites, and the yellow has as yet hardly a foothold. Until now we have accomplished this by political and potential military force. We have been supplemented throughout the century of the Monroe Doctrine by the effects of the long-failing effort of Spain to make the lands of Mexico and Central and South America white by the infusion of the blood of her white colonists into the Indian and negro mass. To-day Spain lies exhausted, chiefly because she sought so mightily to achieve that alchemy, to her own heroic impoverishment. To-day, too, that

old ideal of racial amalgamation has been broken on the immutable facts of human inheritance, and the "Latin" lands are slipping back to half-breedism and Indianism.

With that great ally of hope gone from the white, the yellow world to-day clamors for a place in the untamed southern continent. Only for a little while may we hope that our threats can hold back the stream of yellow immigration, while our culture falls back before the rising sea of Indianism. And then, either bloody war or surrender of the fairest gardens of the world, not to the red man, but to the yellow,—and we shall want those lands, and shall have need of them ere this century draws to a close.

There is but one choice, and that is the making of those Indians into real, true wards and supporters of white civilization. It can be done, for if we do not the yellow man will make them yellow, with an ease that will startle us,—if we are here to watch. And that choice turns upon the uplifting of those Indians, those half-bloods, by the understanding of their race, their minds, their aspirations, and their history, and in the end by a system of education that will be the mightiest plan ever devised or ever executed by human minds in the history of the world.

The issue is gigantic, and it is imminently pressing. No man can say how soon it must be completed, ere the dikes break. And we have not yet begun.

At our hand lies Mexico, and the work of under-

standing must begin in Mexico, because, save for the white countries at the southern end of South America, she is closest to us, still, in her culture and in her ways of thought. Mexico has been a white man's country and must yet be. But a white man's country where the red man is the true sharer of our culture, the true ward of our devotion, not a land owing homage to an oppressor, nor yet a painted replica of white civilization. Her own white men have led her as best they knew and their failures have been the failures of all of us, in an era when we understood but little, when education seemed to be something that was to be brought from above, not something that should be nurtured tenderly in the deep soil of life and race and thought. They know, as we know, to-day, that civilization will come as ideas are planted in men's minds in ways which they can grasp and learn, and not as those minds are forced into alien molds. This is the essence of the Mexican problem, and we must face these facts of race and of need and failure before we can understand either how Mexico thinks or what she thinks. Many thousand Mexicans have climbed their way to white culture, understood it and adopted it, and these men, white and of mixed blood, can be trusted to lead the way if we will but give the means, and if but for a few years longer we hold the dikes.

And Mexico will be a white man's land, more truly than she has ever been. Whatever may be the turn of the world's history, whatever may be the change in the very bases of civilization, whether

property shall pass away or socialism become but a leaven, the problem of Mexico will remain this problem of bringing her truly into the white world, a problem of planting, of adaptation, of slow growth, and slow maturing.

CHAPTER II

THE MEXICAN TEMPERAMENT

IN Mexico we stand in the presence of one of the great paradoxes of humanity, a people who are not a people, a race which is not a race, a culture which is not a culture. The Mexican faces the world gravely, seriously offering himself as a people distinct and definite, with national tendencies and ideals, and with a national psychology of its own; yet he is not a people, but an agglomeration of many peoples, with ideals and psychologies still distinct and definite within themselves, like nothing in the world so much as an impressionist painting which blends with distance into harmony, yet which close at hand is made up of innumerable contrasting colors.

The Mexican has long sought to convince us that he is a race, a new race, and he acts indeed with an astonishing unanimity, despite the pressure of one or the other element upon his mind and will; and yet he is two races,—and a hybrid between the two.

He offers us a distinct culture which he claims as his own, a culture which goes back with naïve frankness both to the heritages of old Spain and to the culture-legends of prehistoric Mexico. It is a culture not without definiteness, not without

inspiring qualities to the Mexican people and to the student from other lands, and yet it is in reality two cultures, blended with approximately the skill of a housewife making a toothsome—but much-mixed—hash.

Yet this paradox is the very essence of our study, is itself the key to our understanding of Mexico. That the Mexicans actually are a distinct and rather definite people we must quickly admit. That their culture has certain qualities of unity we shall find. But the claim that they are a new race we must dismiss, for that is only a heritage of our own sentimentalism over the melting pot of the United States, transferred to the darker, more limited field of Mexico.[1]

The culture of Mexico and the national temperament of the Mexican people of to-day are essentially a culture and a temperament of conflict. This conflict is the battle between Spanish individualism on the one hand and Indian communism on the other. Each has affected the other tremendously, but each has left a definite, clear racial tinge which stands out against the confusions of the merging.

The primary strain, the Indian, brought to the mixture and to the consequent cultural conflict many psychological elements as well as racial heritages which will appear in the phases of Mexican

[1] The race question of Mexico, its historic background, and the present tendency of the mixed bloods to resolve themselves into their component racial parts, with the Indian type predominating, is discussed in the author's "The People of Mexico", Book I, chapters I to III.

life which we shall take up. They are too deep a part of Mexican psychology to be separated from it under the observation of to-day. Suffice it here, then, to set down a few of the colorful phrases of one of the world's greatest observers, Alexander von Humboldt. His characterizations of the Indians as he saw them in the closing years of the eighteenth century may be taken as the earliest scientific analysis of the Indian, an analysis whose truth to-day is its own proof, aside from the great prestige of its author. He writes:

I know of no race of men who appear more destitute of imagination (than the Indians of Mexico). When an Indian attains a certain degree of civilization he displays a great facility of apprehension, a judicious mind, a natural logic and a particular disposition to subtilize or seize the finest differences in the comparison of objects. He reasons coolly and orderly, but he never manifests that versatility of imagination, that glow of sentiment, and that creative and animating art which characterize the nations of the south of Europe and several tribes of African negroes.[1]

The music and dancing of the natives partake of this want of gaiety which characterizes them . . . their songs are terrific and melancholic. The Indian women show more vivacity than the men.[2]

Without ever leaving the beaten track, they display great aptitude in the exercise of the arts of imitation, and they display a much greater still for the purely mechanical arts.[3]

The taste for flowers undoubtedly indicates a relish for the beautiful.[4]

The families (of Indians) who enjoy the hereditary rights of *cacicasgo* (feudal power), far from protecting the tributary

[1] Alexander von Humboldt, "Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain," Book II, chapter VI, page 170.
[2] *Ibid.*, 171. [3] *Ibid.*, 173. [4] *Ibid.*, 174.

caste of Indians, more frequently abuse their power and influence. . . . Exercising the magistry in the Indian villages, they levy the capitation tax; they not only delight in becoming the instruments of the oppressions of the whites; but they also make use of their power and authority to extort small sums for their own advantage. . . . When the Spaniards made the conquest of Mexico . . . the cultivator was everywhere degraded, the highways . . . swarmed with mendicants.[1]

Recent examples ought to teach us how dangerous it is to allow the Indians to form a *status in statu*, to perpetuate their insulation, barbarity of manners, misery, and, consequently, motives of hatred against the other castes. These very stupid, indolent Indians who suffer themselves patiently to be lashed at the church doors appear cunning, active, impetuous, and cruel, whenever they act in a body in popular disturbances.[2]

Momentarily, let us add nothing to these phrases, selected out of Humboldt's rich record, a record which stands to this day as one of the great interpretive documents of all time, almost the only unchallenged analysis of the Mexican people in any language or in any age.

To the relatively simple Indian conception of life, expressed in their communal organization and in the combination of resignation, melancholy and treachery which Humboldt described, the Spaniards brought as high a culture as the Europe of their day could boast. They came not as on private enterprise, seeking religious freedom (or markets or materials), as the English colonists went to Northern America, but as agents and protegés of the central government. They were individualistic

[1] Alexander von Humboldt, "Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain," Book II, chapter VI, pages 179, *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, 200.

in their personal ambitions, but the State was always behind them and their greatest possible achievements were personal wealth and positions in the hierarchy and the government,—individualism at its most concrete.

That individualism was the source of the pride, the arrogance, the self-assertion of the conquerors. It was the source of the love of adventure which brought them hither and of the self-consciousness which dramatized every phase of their battles with the Indians. It made the astonishing and often ludicrous contrasts which, like scenes from Don Quixote, marked the life of the Spaniards in Mexico, the combination of the "lordly haciendas and their barren seignorial halls, the combination of their pride of birth and their tattered garments, the combination and the contrast of their oppression of the Indians for workers, erected on the Indian civilization they had destroyed."[1]

Of the impetus of that Spanish influx we have, in history and in the Mexico that we see to-day, innumerable evidences. The stream of humanity and of culture which swept westward from Spain was in volume and in quality in no way comparable to that which sailed to New England from north Europe. In numbers it was far greater, for three hundred thousand Spaniards went to Mexico alone during the colonial epoch. In quality this emigration averaged well, but it was the quality of high adventure and of priesthood rather than the quality of

[1] *Cf.* F. Garcia Calderon, "Latin America," New York, 1913, pp. 29–43.

democracy. It gave to the Indians something of those traits of mastery which the Indian communism invited, an often kindly and always strong mastery which sought to solve, in its rough, mediæval way, the problems of existence for the communes and the communal Indians.

The Spanish influences have, however, undergone vital changes, not only in the Indian and mestizo adaptations, but in those of the actual white descendants of the Spaniards in Mexico to-day. There, as in all Latin America, we find in the creoles a "Spanish" racial and psychological type which is in many ways most unlike the types and the psychology of Spain. Certain fundamental bases remain, but many virtues and perhaps a few faults have been lost in succeeding generations. The Spaniards of colonial days who came as governors and as officers remained essentially Spaniards, while the native-born whites, like the native-born mestizos, held an inferior rank in the social caste system. These creoles developed throughout Latin America a distinctive method of thought. Back of them were the long history of Spain, the Roman laws, the Catholic Church, Latin cultural ideals. There were Spanish pride and Spanish individualism and Spanish grandeur, but through them all shone and shines to-day a wide-swept spirit of separateness, a lordly affection for the land of their birth, a paternal bond, almost like that of a family, with the Indian.

The white man of Mexico who is in exile to-day in the United States and in Europe is homesick, not for the cities and the hills of Spain, but for the

towering mountains, the broad plateaus, and the eternal summer of Mexico. These men and women are part of Mexico while they are at the same time part of the white culture of Spain, just as the true American of the United States is, although American, a part of the white culture of England.

It is not this modern creole to whom is to be traced the origin of the mixed bloods of Mexico, moreover. Save for the inevitable mésalliances which come between the youths of different races in any land where there is close contact, there is not to-day any great infusion of creole blood into the native strain. The origin of the mestizo goes back to the very deliberate amalgamation with the Indian which may be considered, in a way, as an actual ideal of the original Spanish colonists. Fired with religious zeal for conversions, encouraged by the Spanish Crown in the contraction of legal and even illegal marriages and in the breeding of sons to be educated to carry on the rule of Spain in the New World, the forming of the mixed-breed castes was far more than a mere series of indiscretions by the soldiers of the conquerors.

Spain herself had outlived many invasions and in absorbing the blood of her enemies, from the Roman soldiers down to the Moors, had gained many of the characteristics which made her great. Thus the conquerors came to Mexico with a mixture of bloods and heritages which may be justly regarded as a primary cause of their idea of assimilating the Indians by breeding with them. But these old strains, mingled in Spain, did not have the

chaotic results which their own mingling with the Indian brought to Mexico. The reason is simple and is now definitely recognized. The peoples which met in Spain were not of greatly different type; all were of the white or closely allied races, and the union of each new strain produced, at first, more virile peoples than the parent stems were creating. In Mexico, however, the race with which the white Spaniards sought to merge was farther away from their own than any other that could have been found. The result was what could now be anticipated, a people inheriting the worst traits of both and burying the virtues of both deep beneath the skins darkening ever to the lower type, with minds which do not seek even the natural goods of the poorer of the two elements.

The two great races, then, have formed not only the background of the psychology of Mexico to-day, but have been themselves largely affected by the combination which has resulted from their physical union. Working upon those factors, however, was and is yet another—the Mexican environment.

Few lands are more definite in their physical contour, few are more powerful in the force of climate. This environment has worked on Indian and white and mestizo, but upon the Indian it has acted for unnumbered generations, fashioning the race type into its definite forms, a genuinely constructive force, just as a sculptor's chisel upon his marble is a constructive force. Upon the white man, however, the environment has been acting but four hundred years, definite, powerful, indeed,

but utterly destructive, breaking down those virtues, those ingrained qualities which he brought with him from the cradle in which he was himself nurtured for his own unnumbered generations.

No man can know, even as he looks into his own heart, of the influence of earth and sky and water, of mountains and of sea upon his soul and its development. Buckle found in the unscalable heights of the Himalayas the source of the hopeless philosophy of the Eastern Indian, and in the easily conquered mountains of Europe the urge and the confidence which drove the white man to world mastery. The mountains of Mexico, the vast upheaval of the backbone of the land, the appalling deserts in the north, the dank jungles in the south have a definite effect, to-day, upon the foreigners who travel there and upon those who live there. It seems that they must have had a tremendous, unceasing influence upon the Indian races to whom those mountains, those deserts and those jungles were all their outlook and their life from the days of their first ancestors.

Of the climate which is in great part the result of that very physical contour, there is something more definite to say. It is a cruel climate, despite its tropical luxuriance, and it is cruel to the Indians as well as to the whites. Inadequate rainfall makes the raising of crops difficult, save in sections where altitudes or humidity or heat are equally powerful depressants. Mexico lies chiefly in the tropics; her most salubrious sections are at a height of a mile or more above the level of the sea; and nervousness

or apathy are the frequent results of heat and altitude. Physical and mental vitality are at low ebb, and sickness stalks the land, in good years and bad, while uncertain rainfall brings famine again and again to a people whose climate is ever inviting them to ease and laxity. Few Mexicans are really well, and undernourishment, nervous and digestive diseases ravage the country through winter and summer, through war and peace.[1]

The factors of race and climate are the matrix and the mold of all humanity. No people show more clearly than the Mexicans the influence of both in those strange ways of human alchemy which interact in the creation of that phase which we call temperament.

To the formation of the Mexican temperament there have been brought not only the direct forces of race and climate, but certain powerful secondary factors of the social system which those two have built. Of all these, perhaps the most potent is the isolation which separated the three races and the various castes and classes through old time and continue to separate them to-day. The white creole of Mexico only partially understands the Indian mind, and if anything the mestizo understands the Indian less than does the more cultured white. On his part, the Indian understands neither the white man (whom he calls strange names which have lost their original significance and mean merely

[1] The climate and health conditions of Mexico are treated more fully in the author's "The People of Mexico", Book I, chapter v, and Book II, chapter i.

opprobrium and hatred) nor the mestizo, whom he looks down upon as a half-breed, and calls a "coyote."

The culture of each element is strange to the other, and even the mestizo, with the chaotic mixture of white and red traditions and instincts which is his cross, considers himself as a being apart, broader in his wisdom of the practical world of his own people. He expects no one to understand him and resents the most casual suggestion that he has anything to learn. The Indian lives in a realm of his own, silent, half-thinking, perhaps. Moving side by side with his mestizo and white brothers, he might be all the thousands of miles away from them which his instincts and traditions indicate.

All this may seem fantastic and exaggerated to us, but if we realize that this condition exists in the United States to-day, and that the thoughts of the negro freed-men hardly ever wander into the realm of things which occupy even the most meagerly trained white minds, we need not seek any other examples to explain or to vivify this fact of racial isolation.

So with the great extremes of poverty and comfort. In no land in the world is there a greater contrast between the hopeless misery of the lowly and the mere comfort of the well-to-do. All the forms of psychological isolation are present in Mexico, all the walls which shut men away and apart from one another and create those conflicts in the unity of the whole which are the tragedy of

all social history. Yet in that isolation there is still group relationship, still the working, by whatever devious ways, of the various elements upon one another and upon the other groups of race or caste or wealth.

Perhaps the most significant development in the individual through this group conflict has been the appearance of imitation as an outstanding mental and temperamental characteristic of the Mexicans. The search of each lower group for the springs of authority in the higher have led to a worship of authority and a system of imitation of authority which have affected both individual and group life to an astonishing degree.

Indeed, all foreigners who have been successful in the training of Mexican workers have begun with imitation and have sought to develop their protegés from imitation into some semblance of originality, using the fact that their imitation is reproductive rather than assimilative. A peon carpenter, for instance, will create a piece of furniture from a photograph in an illustrated magazine where he would find himself absolutely baffled in an attempt to assimilate by example or through description the creative process of the original maker of the article. The experience of the National Railways of Mexico in the training of skilled native mechanics by careful instruction where apprenticeship under foreign workmen had been a virtual failure is a striking example of this phase of Mexican thought.

Even the upper classes are imitators of things

European and American. The French fashions affected by the women of Mexico are essentially impractical for the Mexican climate, but they are followed with an unadapting, doglike subservience unknown to the women of any other nation. The culture, too, of the upper class is Spanish or an imitation of the French, and the influence of European artistic standards has always been a serious drawback to the development of native arts.

Politically, the imitative quality of Mexican temperament has led to strange developments of government. One of the severest criticisms which is made against Mexican statesmen, past and present, is their imitation of foreign political forms, rather than their adaptation of them to the needs of the Mexican people. The constitutions of Mexico have all been imitations of foreign types, mostly American, and the socialistic document of 1917 was of far greater interest to the radicals of Germany, France and the United States than it was to the Mexicans whom it purported to benefit.

In business, also, the Mexican shows a decided tendency to imitation. A Mexican is inherently opposed to embarking on a venture which is either new to him or new to the country. Foreigners, therefore, have been allowed to take the lead in practically all industrial progress, after which Mexican capitalists and business men have followed with similar enterprises.

Innate conservatism is yet another controlling element in the Mexican, and particularly in the

Indian, temperament. But one idea at a time seems able to possess his mind, and when he changes his opinion, it is not necessarily because he has weighed the two plans against each other, but because the new idea has crowded out the old simply by displacing it upon the track of his mind. It often seems as if in no other race were there such stubbornness and adherence to ancient practice, incomprehensible to the outsider and yet a force which has to be recognized and dealt with in every contact with the people. The Indian's reasoning power is influenced and seems indeed dominated by this conservatism. Witness the story of the Indian who for years continued planting a plot of ground which was subject to floods which year after year destroyed his crop,—because he had once got a famously rich return from that bit of property.

The recognition and acceptance of authority, the desire to have another take the responsibility of choice, is a trait of temperament linked closely with imitation and conservatism. The Indian is happiest when he has a real *jefe* (or chief), but he demands sincerity or the appearance of it in those to whose authority he looks, although if sincerity calls for a show of weakness in withdrawal from a position once taken, authority quickly loses its power. Fidelity to a master and devotion to the master's cause may be said to be characteristic,—if the master and the cause maintain their position and dominate the native respect. Childlike as the Indian is in so many ways, in none does he demonstrate it more completely than in his real love for

the strong, even the harsh, hand, if his shrewd appraisal assures him that that firmness is based upon fairness and a "square deal."

It is perhaps this same intellectual valuation which makes the typical Mexican thought process so personal. The Mexican at work can be handled with ease and efficiency if the personal side is taken care of, but if it is neglected he will shirk and no bullying or force will drive him on.

The Indian from his savage personalism and the mestizo from the defensiveness which is characteristic have developed a keenness and cunning which nurture the suspicion which also colors their thought processes. There are many towns in one's travels over Mexico which object to harboring a stranger even for a single night. An offer of money for entertainment is very likely to arouse immediate opposition, not because there is any objection to money in return for hospitality, but because the natives cannot understand why anyone should come to them with money unless he has designs against them. Cunning themselves and prone to take advantage, they are naturally afraid of the stranger. They suspect new forms of taxation; they fear being forced into military service or that they may be carried to work on distant plantations. This suspicion is not manifested solely toward white men, for there are long-standing feuds between tribes and villages of their own people.

A Mexican will not always trust another Mexican with a secret, either personal or business, even though he knows him well. He prefers, when he

knows foreigners, to confide in an American or Englishman. This is manifested in the real lack of coöperation in business and social enterprises, where suspicion of their fellows takes extremely definite form.

This suspicion, this lack of coöperation, seems to permeate Mexican psychology. The story is told of Villa, the bandit "general", that he trusted no one, and when he had gone alone into the country with a faithful companion, he would separate from that companion before carrying out the definite purpose of his trip. The first night alone he invariably built a camp fire and then rode away from it into the hills or the brush to throw this faithful friend off the track, in case he had taken it into his head to follow.

At base, this suspicion is one of the great characteristics of the Mexican temperament, rather than merely a kink in the process of reasoning. It is the heritage of temperament from the long processes of indirect thinking,—in other words, of intellectual dishonesty.

The lie stands out as one of the flaming characteristics of the Mexican. Of all the unhappy tendencies of his life, this taken alone would of itself explain almost all of the misfortunes of Mexico as a nation and of the Mexicans as individuals. Upon this characteristic we need not judge from a purely foreign viewpoint; Mexicans themselves have written and talked of it. One of the great students of his people has expressed it in these words:

The evil which has tainted all our social life, the microbe which has been weakening our organism, and which if we do not definitely attack it, will finish by destroying Mexico, is the lie.

Many will perhaps laugh at this conclusion, announced with so much formality, because unfortunately we ourselves have reached the point of minimizing that infirmity, of making a joke of it, or taking it lightly. We are able informally to cast it aside, and in a moment of good humor to say to a friend that he lies, and he laughs and all who hear us laugh.

In the United States the word "lie" cannot be used as a joke, as in Mexico there are words which cannot be used as a joke, because they touch the foundations of susceptibility. This Anglo-American susceptibility to the word "lie", imported from England, symbolizes a great moral step in the elevation of character. It is not that the Anglo-American or the Englishman is not accustomed to lying; it is that they hold the lie to be the worst of degradations, and if they incur it, they cannot endure having others discover that they harbor that loathsome perversion. . . . It is necessary to feel oneself high and strong indeed to adopt the truth as a line of conduct; but at the same time the truth prevents our allowing our pride to seduce us, for it places us ever in the presence of reality, which is the whole world of our conditions and our limitations, and brings to us the sensation of being atoms in all that does not touch our dignity.[1]

The lie, or rather the living lie of lack of unity between the professions and actuality, has played its part in every phase of Mexican history and plays it forever in the mazes of Mexican psychology. There are many failures in the understanding of the foreigner and the Mexican, but the lack of appreciation of this solemn fact of the disparity between words and deeds goes deeper than any other. We

[1] T. Esquivel Obregon, "La Influencia de España y EE.UU. sobre México," *Casa Editorial Calleja*, Madrid, 1918, pages 95–97.

seek to arouse in the Mexican that sense of truth which has been ingrained into us—and we fail; and unless we learn better, we never know why it is that we fail.

Now, lying and deceit, as the passage quoted above indicates, are not particularly grievous crimes to the Mexican mind. We appeal to truth and we do not get it, and that is all, unless we become nasty about it. But there are other words, indeed, that have their deep meaning to the Mexican. And one of these is the word "shameless."

As a curse, nothing is a deeper insult than telling a Mexican that he is *sinverguenza* or shameless. Here we touch the root of a characteristic of the Mexican temperament which is peculiarly his own. Honor and dignity are the prized virtues, even though honor may to us seem a trifle empty without truth. Still, "honor" is a great idea and a great shibboleth even to the mestizo who will steal your last cent and tell you smilingly to your face that he has never been within half a mile of you or your property. It is even a noble word to the soldier, who will not quit before action, but will retire in the midst of battle, in order to save his honor, which would be wronged indeed if he remained to be beaten. For honor to the Mexican means prestige; and cheating in games, in war and in business is to him but the maintaining of his honor,—his prestige and prowess.

Neither lying nor honor, for that matter, have very much relationship to the religious ideals of the people, and here the Mexican temperament

differs radically from most others. The ethical side of religion is almost lightly regarded, and the function of the Church is chiefly, to the average Mexican mind, to furnish manners and to sanctify certain important functions of life, as birth, death and marriage. The so-called "religious" wars of the early nineteenth century were concerned not at all with the religious question, but solely with the right of the Roman Catholic Church to enjoy the revenues it once paid the king. Many of the traits of temperament and character which are being listed here will come up in other sections for discussion, but the question of religion, even to the question of morality, belongs exclusively on the plane of ingrained temperament.

Religion, so far as it was a factor before the introduction of Protestantism about fifty years ago, was a utilitarian measure, accepted as having little to do with the relations of men to each other, and hardly more with their relation to Deity. The Mexican is by temperament emotional, but he is not very much concerned with either of the "great commandments" which touch upon man's relationship to his fellows and to his god. As we shall see, those are factors which belong on planes of social psychology to which the mass of the Mexican people have not yet attained.[1]

The emotional phases of the Mexican temperament are perhaps best described as being essentially on the emotional plane as such, and hardly at all

[1] See chapter IX, "The Mexican Crowd," and chapter XI, "The National Ideals."

attaining to the rank of sentiment. Humanity's animal inheritances—fear, self-assertion, sex and greed—are all developed to their fullest in the Mexican, and indeed so strong are they that it is to their gratification, and to their original stimulation, for that matter, that most of the forces of the ordinary Mexican intellect are devoted.

The self-seeking, destructive concentration upon personal ends, which so often seems to be the overwhelming factor of Mexican thought-life, has roots far back in the temperament of its individuals. It was inherited from the Spaniard, perhaps, but was intensified by the Indian, whose communism is after all but the group cohesion found equally in a pack of wolves or a herd of sheep. Hope of personal gain furnishes the mainspring for such endeavor as the Mexican puts forth. And yet when we find ourselves making such sweeping condemnation, memory brings up a thousand examples of true altruism, shining through the clouds of personal selfishness. Devotion there was in the leaders of the land, during the Diaz epoch at least, and devotion there has been in the unselfish heroism of many Mexican individuals. We can never forget that Juan Garcia (a name comparable in its lack of identity to our English John Jones) of Nacosari, a railway engineman, who deliberately hitched his locomotive to a burning train of dynamite and drove at full speed until he was far away from the town, so that the explosion which would have wrecked hundreds of houses and killed thousands of people found him as its only, its deliberate vic-

tim. But these are the glorious exceptions, the rift of light which, like the rainbow after the storm, gives promise of what may yet be, and which, through the devotion of just such men, and of them alone, may in actuality yet come to characterize Mexico.

But for all this altruism and this concentration upon self as well, there is apathy. Forever the lack of ambition for aught save idleness; forever the promise of "*mañana*" and the great things of the morrow,—these drag upon the wheels of such progress as might be. Race, climate, food, perhaps explain it all, but apathy remains, an infirmity of the will, an inability to stir out of that helpless drifting which, when there is no reasoned purpose, is all there is of human volition. Apathy remains, outstanding as a characteristic of Mexico, a part of that choice which, after all, is the beginning and the end of those things which create and support the standards of living and thinking which are themselves our temperament.

These, briefly, are the factors of Mexican temperament which have grown from Mexican traditions and Mexican thinking. But these traditions and thought-processes loom behind and beyond temperament, and still beyond is the group life which is the truest indication of thought and feeling. Temperament is indeed the crystallized thought of generations, but the thinking of to-day is more vitally important, and the decisions of to-morrow will affect us and the world more vitally.

From the subject of temperament our observa-

tion branches out into varied fields, to tradition and culture and play, and to the processes of thought and emotion and then at last to the action of the group. To our eyes when we have lived in Mexico, or to our ears when we have never seen her, they have come through the medium of our own prejudices, of our experiences. We are inclined to judge them with a firm Anglo-Saxon assurance that they sprang from the same states of mind which would have created them in us.

Herein lies perhaps our greatest error in all our study of Mexico. As we picture them, the communities of Mexico are New England or English, Welsh or Scottish villages, their life some sort of undeveloped English, or at most French, cycle of birth and growth and death. We conceive the Mexicans as hiding beneath brown skins minds much like our own and valuing such abstractions as liberty and financial independence much as we do. We compare the Mexican revolutions to the upsurgences of our English forebears, seeking the right to live and to enjoy their beloved freedom. It is thus that we seek to interpret all the manifestations of Mexican politics, to explain all the unpleasant features of Latin-American demagogy. It is because of this that we believe all which is told us of the idealistic reachings of the poor downtrodden Mexican for the things which have been written in our hearts but which the Mexican protagonists use but as words and symbols.

But this we cannot do, if we truly and honestly wish to see Mexico clear. It is doubtless true, as

scientific psychologists have long since told us, that the various races of men, the various ages of men think in the same way; that the same waves of consciousness break the monotony of the surface of the mental sea of all men. But it is not true that the same sequence of impressions follow upon equal stimulus in the minds of Frenchman, American, Indian and Mexican. And most decidedly it is not true that the various races or the various nations place the same values upon the good things of life or upon the various virtues of the common human mind. What is worth while to a European is very likely to seem utterly preposterous and useless to a Thibetan or to a Persian or to a Mexican Indian. The most thoughtless of us will readily admit that the things which the Mexican Indian or the Persian values are preposterous in our eyes. Our failure is in not recognizing that the situation is the same when the Indian or Persian regards those things which for us, on our plane, are the most worth while of all the gifts of the gods.

Let us, then, look at the Mexican from his own standpoint. Let us take the indices of his thought-life as they are presented to our observation and see, not what we ourselves would feel to create such activities, but what the Mexican feels and thinks. Therein we shall find ground upon which to rest our mental feet.

One other phase of Mexico on which we are likely to be led astray is the question of the mestizo psychology. The vast majority of the Mexicans are of mixed breed, Spanish and Indian, and this

confusion of bloods has wrought an appalling confusion in the minds of these struggling millions. As noted at the opening of this chapter, their pitiful effort has been to convince the world that they have created a "new race", a wonderful new people, with the intelligence of the Spaniard and the endurance of the Indian. To us as we watch them the only result of the mixture is the conflict, the weakness and the ineptitude of the half-breed type in every race.

It has become something of a custom among observers of the Mexicans to explain all that is difficult to understand on the ground that it is the "half-breed cropping out." With this the serious student need have no traffic. Half-breedism, under the modern conception of racial inheritances, is significant chiefly in the selections which it makes, physically and mentally, from the parent stems. Here and here alone its conflict and chaos are manifest. The half-breed's failure is in his almost inevitable habit of selecting the worst traits of both his ancestors and burying their virtues so deep that even his distant descendants never unearth them. This tendency is a physical fact, and its effect on the national psychology is to emphasize the importance of the race divisions rather than to give us ground for eliminating the idea of race from our observation.

For this reason, little will be found in these pages to comfort the rabid Indiophile or the sentimental distorter of the sound expressions of modern anthropology as set forth by such scholars as

Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard.[1] Half-breedism is not of itself the significant thing, any more than it is the great racial crime. The significant element is the tendency which half-breedism brings into the higher race group, the tendency downward to the worst of the lower race which is brought into the citadel of racial purity.

Let us go forward then, free to see the Mexican as he is, and let us not gloss over the facts of his racial and psychological tendencies by lumping them under an easy label of "half-breedism." Mexico is Indian and she is Spanish; her mestizos have harmed her only in that they have weakened the higher element without adding strength to the lower. The red line of race runs clear, through all the tangled web of psychology, as it runs through the heaving bulk of all human activity in Mexico.

[1] *Cf.* Madison Grant, "The Passing of the Great Race," New York, 1916, and Lothrop Stoddard, "The Rising Tide of Color," New York, 1920.

CHAPTER III

SIGNPOSTS OF CUSTOM

THE yoke of custom lies upon the Mexican with a weight almost inexplicable to the American or European. The harness of past ages binds him from the cradle to the grave and waits grimly upon his children and his children's children. No single fact of life or of psychology is so permeating. Custom rules in the very highest classes of Mexican society and it utterly dominates the life of the lowest. The Mexican mind works from tradition as its primary basis, and the traditions which influence the Mexican's daily life are unchanging. In lands of different blood and newer culture the traditions of the crowd may change from day to day; there are newspapers, there are the changing standards of civilization, the advances of government, new and pleasant novelties which tempt the taste and influence the mind. In Mexico there is no change; the standards of a thousand years ago are the standards by which the Indian mind judges the events of to-day; the standards of mediæval Spain are still the standards of the mestizos and the creoles.

The psychology of the Mexican mind depends upon these traditions. Its standards of value are

primarily the values of tradition; its relentless logic, which carries it from any premises, true or false, to inevitable conclusions, is the logic of tradition, inexorable and unquestioning. This tremendous force of tradition in Mexico is explicable on a ground which has been noted above. The code of life, of government, of law, is not the codified tradition of the Indians who predominate in the population, but of their Spanish conquerors. The crystallization of tradition into the national code which, as in our own Anglo-Saxon history, has become the safety valve of our individual as well as of our national living, is almost entirely missing in the Mexican's equipment for life. His traditions are active elements in all his mental processes, which in large part again accounts for our difficulty in understanding and evaluating his difficulties aright.

With us, tradition and custom are, at their worst, but products of the bad mental habits of our ancestors. In Mexico we have a condition analagous to the primitive peoples who actually live by the tribal oracles and the directions of medicine men and witches.

The Spanish code indeed rules in government and has been conformed to the life of the upper classes and to the life which they have so long and so faithfully sought to teach the Indians and lower mixed-bloods to accept. But the Spanish code fits but ill the life and the climate of Mexico, nor have its obvious adaptations been adaptations to the real life and spirit of Mexico and its native

races. It dominates the living of Mexico without touching the life of Mexico, as when the Indian is forced to wear woolen trowsers (which he rents by the day) in the towns instead of the white cotton "pajamas" to which he returns when he leaves the city gates.

Thus has come that war of the codified tradition of the Spaniard with the ingrained customs of the Indians, a battle that is at the very heart of the cultural chaos and psychological confusion of the Mexican. The cohesive qualities which in other peoples mix with moral and intellectual tradition and with the social system to the welding of a nation out of a wandering people have been utterly absent from Mexican history, and the unification of the Mexican nation has come, as we have seen, from the homogeneity pushed down upon the Indians and conquerors alike by the social system of distant Spain. Whether we apply to Mexico the test of the dictum of Buckle that progress in national life is due to improvement in the intellectual tradition of a people, or Kidd's contention that it is due to the improvement in the morality of a people we meet alike the same unanswerable enigma, the absence of any intellectual or moral tradition (codified tradition) which has any close relationship to racial history or climatic environment.

Thus, while the laws of Mexico are Spanish, the traditions of the masses are Indian, and we find two basic conceptions affecting all the stream of tradition which makes up Mexican life. One is

the deep belief, common to all savage peoples, in the ways of their ancestors. The other is the communal conception of life and the communal standard of the virtues which Spanish individualism has warped and changed in astonishing ways.

The former manifests itself in the inevitable answer of the Mexican of the lower classes to any question about anything which he may find himself doing: "*Es la costumbre*" ("It is the custom"). The other has its most important and significant survivals upon this same great plane of custom.

In that eternal conformation to tradition and reverence for custom, there stands out in relief one most interesting fact. This is the almost total absence of any truly significant folklore and the relatively little superstition. Tradition has long since given up the transmission from father to son of the tales of great chieftains and kings and wars and glory, and to-day no Mexican who has not read it in books knows anything of the history of his people and little of the history of his country. This astonishing condition, found elsewhere among unlettered peoples only in the lowest races, seems due primarily to the lack of imagination which is so thoroughly a national characteristic. It was aggravated, however, by the activities of the missionary priests of the colonial days, who destroyed so much of the written history of Mexico and in their zeal for conversion transmuted virtually every pagan deity into a Christian saint. To-day the legends old mestizo or Indian story-tellers recount to sympathetic listeners are tales of the early days

of Spanish Mexico, and almost never, so far as record goes, of the true Indian days. The precious legends of the City of Mexico are all concerned with miracles of saints, ghastly crimes and avenging ghosts, and one and all are placed in Spanish colonial times. And when, by good fortune or great tact, one can get a country Indian to recount his local legends, one finds that they deal with the sounding of the bells of acolytes in the depths of mountains, with the wonderful apparitions which have been seen by holy folk, or with the miraculous appearances of sacred pictures in growing trees or on ancient rocks.

Little more encouraging to the antiquary are the superstitions of the Mexicans. These are many, some delightfully quaint and some truly beautiful, but all of them harking back more to Spanish tradition than to native spirit. There is a certain amount of witchcraft, concerning itself chiefly with the casting of spells, and tiny wax images are sold to the faithful with proper charms, so that a pin stuck in any spot in the anatomy of the image will be reflected in the discomfort of the person bewitched,—all forms common to savage peoples.

As for any truly significant tradition (outside the Church) on the "supernatural" plane, it simply does not exist, and a heavy sense of the drab commonplace is all one gains in the search for any flash of imagination among the superstitions of the native Mexican.

But the bonds of custom remain, for custom is the dull twin brother of superstition, and its bond-

age is unrelieved by imagination or by any search for freedom from its toils. It touches all the details of Mexican life, the very plan of her cities, the very architecture of their houses, the dress of her people, the food which they eat.[1]

The bond of custom to ancestral precedent holds primal importance, too, in the ways of work and in the procedure of business.

To this day the children of a carpenter become carpenters; the sons of a *cargador* (the public porter or carrier), though they be a dozen in number, will grow up to be *cargadores*. This is still truer in the native industries where the makers of *rebosos* and baskets, of pottery and of laces follow their fathers and mothers in the ancient family trades. Inefficient methods of work, scorn for modern conveniences and machinery, even the fierce opposition to new comforts are explained sullenly or solemnly by the unanswerable argument, "*Es la costumbre.*" An Indian will load one of the side baskets on the back of his burro with grain and fill the other with stones; he will trot to market with a load of pottery in a great frame upon his back and when he has sold his stock, will take his way home with the frame filled with a load of stones; and to all protests he will reply that this is the way his fathers did before him, and that they were intelligent and worthy men.

Sellers of American steel plows in Mexico will argue with a native Indian purchaser on the merits

[1] *Cf.* "The People of Mexico," Part II, chapters II, V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX.

of a deep blade which will cut the earth a foot below the surface with no more effort on the part of the oxen, but the Indian will buy the steel plow which looks most like the crooked stick which his father and his grandfather used before him, and when he gets his plow to his little farm he will saw off the left handle because the plows of his ancestors were guided with but one hand. For centuries the Mexican Indians have transported earth in woven baskets carried by a harness across their foreheads, and many American and English engineers who were engaged in the early railway construction in Mexico tell how, at the first introduction of imported wheelbarrows, the Indians insisted on removing the wheels and carrying the barrows on their backs.

Whole villages will, conforming to tradition, manufacture nothing but baskets, or nothing but pottery, although other necessities of their simple life may have to be brought for many miles from the market places to which they trudge to sell their own surplus product.

In fact, custom has rather more to do with business methods in Mexico than have enterprise and efficiency. The distribution system in vogue in the country is probably the most archaic in a world in which distribution everywhere lags behind manufacture. Before the Spaniards, Mexican business was practically all done in the market places, and this was a custom to which the Spaniards brought little change. The most glowing descriptions of the conquerors had to do with the fairs and market

places of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital which was located where Mexico City now stands. Cortez reported that sixty thousand people assembled daily in these markets and that every fifth day as many as one hundred thousand were to be seen. Business was carried on largely by barter; foods, animal and vegetable, cooked and uncooked; native fabrics, coarse or fine, in the piece or made up into garments; precious stones, ornaments of metal, shells and feathers; implements, building materials, matting, baskets, furniture, medicines, herbs and pottery were all to be found in the same market place. Everything was sold by count or measure, and barter was almost the only means of exchange, although gold dust in transparent quills, tin and copper in T-shaped pieces, and grains of the *cacao* or chocolate plant were standards of value and passed in exchange. The Aztecs were great traders and carried their products to distant provinces where they were exchanged in the fairs and markets, so that Aztec pottery and jewelry is to this day to be found in the ruins from one end of Mexico to the other. Under the Aztecs there were no beasts of burden, and all products had to be carried on human backs, a limitation to trade so great that one of the marvels of the Aztec civilization is that it grew to such proportions without the aid of four-footed animals.

The inheritances of Aztec custom mark the business of Mexico to this day. While the larger cities are always well supplied with a variety of foods, this is largely due to the fact that the distributors

either themselves or through their agents go out into the country to buy, and themselves transport the supplies into the central markets. In the smaller towns, however, there are often sudden shortages of various supplies; for the Indian, who often travels fifty or sixty miles with his load of chickens, or vegetables, or baskets, is unaffected by the demands of the market, and goes only when he has enough goods to make a load or when he happens to be in need of funds. In fact, the market has been since time immemorial so much a social center that the Indian will neglect his crops or his manufacture to take a small load of produce to a fair in order to sit surrounded by his family before an infinitesimal stock spread out before him on a mat, his chief object to watch the life of the fair and to gossip with old friends and new acquaintances.

These tiny stocks of goods are always amusing, and the nonchalance with which a country Indian will sit for hours behind his tiny display of useless wares is one of the charms and pities of Mexico. Except in the great cities the Indian tradesman much prefers to sell his goods in single pieces or small lots to disposing of his entire stock. The story is told of the effort of an American in the hot country to buy the entire product of broom corn of a neighboring village. His offer was promptly refused, and the only satisfaction he could get out of his explanations that the offer guaranteed a greater return than the Indians could make from spending months in the hand manu-

facture and sale of brooms was that if they sold all their stock at once they would have nothing to do for the succeeding months. Residents in the suburbs of Mexican towns know that an Indian driving a flock of a dozen turkeys (with the characteristic long whip with which the birds are herded like sheep) will promptly refuse an opportunity to sell the entire lot. He is willing to sell one or even two, but he is going to market, and he is not going to be cheated out of his day in town. Women vendors in interior villages will not sell their stock of eggs, for instance, except by the *mano*, that is, the hand, or five pieces at once, and if one wishes to buy five dozen eggs, one must buy twelve *manos*, paying for each *mano* in coin of the realm as it is counted out. Often where varied products are bought from the same market woman, each article must be paid for singly. This may well be due to the ignorance which makes multiplication or addition impossible, but it is more likely traceable to a perfectly sound custom which decrees that eggs shall be sold by the *mano* and that each product shall be bought by itself.

Bargaining is the rule in Mexico as in other lands where primitive peoples are engaged in trade. This is probably due also to the ancient heritage from the days of barter when both the product bought and the product sold were influenced by the law of supply and demand. The fact remains, however, that as a rule the Indian vendors, and indeed the proprietors of the shops around the market place, will ask from fifty to a hundred per

cent. more than they are willing to take for the articles on sale.

Originally the stores in a Mexican city were all grouped about the plaza and even the finest goods could be bought in tiny holes-in-the-wall. While in the larger cities this custom later gave way to large department and specialty stores on the main streets away from the market, in essence the Mexican shop remains as it has remained for centuries. The exterior gives but little indication of the goods to be found within, and save for the blankets, the dresses and the trinkets hung on nails in the doorway (more for decoration than for display), almost no effort is made to tempt the buyer to enter. The thick walls of the Mexican buildings and heavy shutters of wood or iron inclose most of the desirable products from the view of the possible purchaser. This is partially due to the ancient and still prevalent fear of theft, but it also harks back to the personal element in intercourse in Mexico, which takes its forms from communal relationship. In Mexico one buys from one's friends and seldom is a sale consummated without a pleasant conversation and exchange of the amenities and gossip between proprietor and purchaser. One enjoys being greeted cordially and by name by the proprietor of a shop, and although prices, even for staple articles, have always varied from door to door, the Mexican is so loyal to his friends that he seldom trades outside their circle if he can avoid it.

The foreign shops in Mexico only emphasize this condition of Mexican trade, and it is largely because

the French, the Germans, the Spaniards and the Syrians understand and work upon this personal element in the Mexican purchaser that they are the foreigners who control most of the retail trade. Most grocery stores in Mexico are run by Spaniards, and their willingness to treat even the humblest peon who buys a centavo's worth of salt with thorough courtesy, combined with efficiency of management, made their success possible. The Germans, who control the hardware trade, cater as they always do to local custom, and the humblest Indian from the mountains feels perfectly at home in the elegant hardware stores of the metropolis, where young German clerks, who have pored over Spanish grammars by night, meet them, talk their language and serve them efficiently. The French dry-goods stores, with their French and Mexican clerks, elaborate of manner and indifferent to trade, seem the ablest of all foreigners to give the Mexican women, from the most exclusive ladies to the humblest peon, the peculiar attention which custom has made them desire.

The Mexican clerk is often criticized for his nonchalance, for his debonair dishonesties and for his cigarette smoking on duty. But always there is a subtle understanding of class, a subtle patronage of the woman in a *reboso* and a subtle deference to the lady with a hat which fits him peculiarly for the work before him.

Following a venerable custom, Mexican stores are closed for the noonday *siesta* from 1 to 3 P.M., and no foreign bustle has ever been able to eradicate

the custom. On the other hand Mexican stores open as early as 7.30 or 8 o'clock in the morning in the smaller towns and seldom close before 7 or 8 at night,—as much of a concession to the climate and custom as is the noonday *siesta*.

Supplies, not only of food, but even of the more staple needs of life, are bought for the day only. A few centavos worth of sugar, a centavo of salt, five centavos of coffee, one or two eggs, the day's potatoes, green vegetables and meat fill the market basket of the cook, and a single spool of thread and barely enough cloth for the purpose intended are purchased by the seamstress or the housewife. There are practically no charge accounts, and business, even before the uncertainties of revolution, was done largely on a cash basis. Checks are seldom used in trade, and in the old days when paper money made the handling of large sums easy, a middle-class Mexican often carried as much as a thousand or two thousand pesos on his person. Banks are used only by large concerns, the common people having but little confidence in them, a prejudice which the disastrous financial history of the Carranza régime apparently justified.

The Indians and the lower peons have always preferred *pesos duros* (hard dollars) or gold to paper, and the problem of transporting gold and silver coin to distant villages and camps was serious even before the recrudescence of banditry following the 1910 revolution.

One of the few developments of modern business in Mexico has been the purchase of goods by mail

order and on the installment plan. The installment business was started long ago by the American sewing-machine manufacturers who for years have had their agents covering the country on horseback, selling sewing machines on installments of three pesos a month in the most distant villages. More recently other enterprising foreigners have gone into the business of selling brass beds—always a sign of social standing in Mexico—phonographs and chromos on a similar installment plan.

The ancient industry of producing life-size crayon portraits of deceased relatives and delivering them in beautiful gilt frames has long flourished in Mexico. In a land where there are practically no savings and where the wages are so near the sums actually required to keep body and soul together, it would seem that the installment business might encounter difficulties, but the experience has been that the possession of a chromo, sewing machine or brass bed gives such cachet to the owner that the fear of losing it drives him to any means of meeting the payment when the installment collector makes his rounds.

Mail-order buying grew extensively during the time of Diaz. The American mail-order houses published their great catalogues in Spanish and scattered them from the Rio Grande to Patagonia, and every American traveler in the interior villages has had the experience of a surreptitious call from some young Mexican who has watched him pass on the street and who wishes to inquire more fully regarding the value of the articles catalogued and

the method of ordering. Before business conditions were entirely upset by the recent revolution, Mexico City houses were doing an increasing mail-order business. Advertisements filled the Mexican papers and catalogues almost as elaborate as their American prototypes were sent broadcast in response to many inquiries.

Mexican politeness is found in business life not less than in social etiquette. The genesis of business custom goes back to Spanish times and to Spanish traditions, many of which are preserved more conscientiously in Mexico than in Spain herself. In entering a store or an office no one is too busy to say "Good morning," or if he knows the proprietor personally, to stop and shake hands, while the members of both families are inquired for individually. In business correspondence the forms of ancient courtesy are maintained scrupulously, and even to this day a formal business letter from a Mexican firm will be signed,—instead of "yours truly"—with the alarming array of initials, S. S. S. Q. B. S. M., which means, "*Su seguro servidor, que besa su mano,*" literally translated, "Your faithful servant, who kisses your hand."

The traditional background of Mexican living and thinking has, indeed, this other side, wherein the social amenities are of vital importance, and of which the forms of business procedure, pleasant though they are, are only a reflection. Standing out like a bright flower against the background of much that is unlovely, the social relationships of the Mexicans and the social customs which make

up their enjoyment of life are always a delight to the observer.

At the very foundation of the entire system of social procedure we find a custom, a virtual cult, which is so deeply grounded a part of Mexican social and business life that it is comprehended by few foreigners and is given no emphasis at all by the Mexicans,—for to them it is like clothes and food, one of the things that have always been. The reference is to the relation of *compadres* or co-fathers which is at the basis of Mexican social intercourse. It is the binding element in Mexican friendships and a survival to-day in succinct form of the communal and kin relationships of the Indians, for to all intents and purposes it is the virtual adoption of "blood-brothership" which is the characteristic of most savage societies. Modified from Spanish forms, it has been raised in Mexico to a cult of social union which influences and beautifies all business and social relationships. Technically, a *compadre* (co-father is the literal translation) is one who has been a godfather to one of your children, who has been associated with you as godfather of another child, or who is the father of a child to whom you have acted as godfather. In other words, *compadres* (a *comadre* is a woman in the same relationship, but the tie is much less binding and in actuality has more a courtesy value than the close bond of the *compadres*) are those who are associated as fathers and godfathers of the same children.

It is no small thing to be invited to be the god-

father of a child in Mexico. There is considerable expense in the baptismal ceremony, the baptismal dress of a child is always elaborate, and the festival is in keeping with the social and financial standing of the family,—and all of these expenses the godfather is expected to pay. Therefore no Mexican will ask any but a true friend or patron to assume the expenses and responsibility coincident to this formal creation of the *compadrazco.* The relationship of *compadres* therefore does not begin nor does it end with the baptism. The friendship is very close before the invitation to become a godfather is extended, and the sealing of the bond practically makes the *compadre* a member of the household. The relationship is complicated by the connections of other *compadres* with each other, so that in a Mexican family with many children the outsider, foreigner or Mexican, who is not a *compadre,* may well feel that he is outside the inner circle, no matter how courteous or how cordial his hosts may be.

The relationship of *compadres* reaches beyond the household. Little clubs or "circles" have their basis in this relationship, and the business patronage of a middle-class Mexican household is very likely to be determined by the *compadre* relationship with the shopkeepers of the town. The links that bind Mexican friendships are therefore not only deeply rooted but far-reaching, and in this relationship is to be found the explanation of much of the social etiquette, many of the business customs, and not a little of the general ceremoniousness of the

Mexican which at first seem senseless to the foreigner. It is a human bond between men which transcends blood ties and transcends even the appearances of brusqueness and rudeness on the part of Mexicans toward strangers. It has its ramifications into the paternal relationship of the various classes, for often an *hacendado* or a patron becomes the godfather of children of his employees and so binds the family to himself and himself to his retainer with links whose roots we may blindly seek in race or in government systems.

All the relationships which characterize the social and business unity of Mexicans have their reflections in the politeness which is so famous a tradition of their country. Psychologically, politeness had its orgins in accepted inferiority, and it seems obvious that the so elaborately fixed and recognized social scaling of Mexico and the sureness of position which such a scaling alone can give were the origin of the courtly courtesy of Mexican peon and gentleman alike.

In an earlier day this courtesy was universal, but since the upheavals of revolution and socialism much of the innate politeness of the peon and Indian has disappeared. But the Mexican gentleman still retains his charming manners, and in home and office is ever the courteous, gentle host, whatever his real sentiments toward his visitor may be.

The courtesy between men begins in the city street and on the highways of the country. A Mexican gentleman always takes off his hat to another, shakes hands upon meeting and upon

parting, and where there has been a long absence, embraces his friend first over the right shoulder and then over the left, patting the back and shaking hands once more as the *abrazo* is broken. In the country every passerby is spoken to, the usual form of salutation being "*Adios*" ("Good-by", or literally, "To God" or "God be with you"), the peon or Indian in other days almost invariably removing his hat as he speaks, and even mumbling "*Con su permiso*" ("With your permission") as he trots on his way. This courtesy is not only from superior to inferior, and vice versa, but between equals. Politeness was ingrained in the Mexican by churchly training and tradition, although the forms have of course no more meaning than similar expressions in English or any other language; the elaborateness with which the courtesies are performed and the charm of the words themselves give a touch of picturesque formality which is always impressive.

It all adds to the pleasure of living in Mexico and places in the hands of every one, high or low, a key which opens every pathway, for no matter how dense a Mexican crowd, no matter how apparently engrossed in their own affairs, a simply murmured "*Con permiso*" will open the way for anyone, be he peon or elegant lady. The etiquette of the highway is as fixed as are other traditions in Mexico, and no peon who is not in his cups or a "socialist" would think of passing upon the inside (next the wall) of any person of higher social state, and always a gentleman gives way to a lady or to an older man

on the narrow sidewalks which line the Mexican streets, for the inside next the wall is the place of vantage and so the most desirable side of the walk,—there is no right or left rule of passing save for vehicles.

Mexican social etiquette is founded upon a courtly tradition which gives first place to women and to older men, and which receives the friend with effusive courtesy and strangers with dignified politeness. The embrace is common in Mexico between men, and between women the kiss upon the right cheek and then the left is a custom always followed, the younger woman or the social inferior kissing the cheek offered by the other.

Inside a Mexican house the courtesies are observed with the most meticulous adherence to tradition. At every doorway there is a protest as to who shall go first; in the drawing room there is always a polite waiting for the designation of seats by the mistress of the home. The formal arrangement of the room, with the sofa in the middle of the longest wall and one armchair at right angles at either end, gives opportunity for social distinctions which the Mexican lady uses with instinctive breeding. The place of honor is the sofa, the hostess sitting in the left corner and the most important guest at her right, while in order the armchair at her left and the armchair at the right of the sofa are filled by other visitors.

The formalities of introduction never vary, the host begging the permission of the more important person to present the less important, and the latter

responding by stating his full name, in response to which the other does the same. This is varied only regarding women, who do not repeat their names. The famous courtesy of the host's presenting to the visitor the house and all within it is, needless to say, only a formality, although should an uninformed foreigner happen to accept the gift of a jewel or a book which he had admired, the old-fashioned Mexican would insist with unanswerable courtesy upon his actually taking it away, an insistence which springs both from tradition and from his desire to save his guest embarrassment at whatever cost.

There are, however, limitations to Mexican courtesy, and seldom is the foreigner allowed to presume upon it, for the social group in which a Mexican moves has definite limitations and is broadened only at his own choice. Foreigners who come with letters of introduction are effusively greeted, often entertained at café or club, but seldom are they introduced into the home life of the Mexican. In fact, the opening of the home is a courtesy which is so guarded as to be a very true sign of complete acceptance of a friend. Mexican gentlemen may know each other in a club, in business, and even at dances where both their families are present, but unless a friendship has been built up between their wives or their daughters, neither will be invited into the home of the other or introduced to the ladies except in the most formal fashion, and then only if circumstances provide the occasion.

There is comparatively little informality in social relationships in any case, and, save for the intercourse of young girls, Mexicans of either sex seldom drop in informally upon their friends. Large family parties or formal dinners are the normal social functions of Mexican life, and, although there is no lack of fun of the most wholesome sort in such affairs, everything will have been carefully and studiously prepared before the guests arrive.

The Mexican women live in a cage of custom. Never, whether married or single, will they appear in public with a man to whom they are not related. Their escort is either father or husband or brother, and always their relationships with other men are on the most formal terms. In the colonial days and in the early time of the independence, no Mexican lady would go shopping unless accompanied by an older woman member of the household, and even now Mexican ladies never go on the street alone; if they go to market they are accompanied by a servant to carry the packages, and if they go shopping in the stores they usually go with a woman friend who, however, need not be an older chaperone. At night they go out only when accompanied by one of the men of their family.

Although to a certain extent the barriers have been broken down, still to-day women of even middle-class birth look askance at employment in stores or offices. Unless they enter a convent, the older unmarried women live on with their father or mother, and when these have died continue to move about from house to house as the guests of their

married brothers and sisters. Servants have always been cheap in Mexico, and every family of any means whatever has one or more. Mexican ladies therefore seldom perform any household tasks, although the management of a Mexican establishment with its host of usually incompetent servants is a problem which brings out all the considerable executive ability of the Mexican woman of the upper classes. They do, however, take a personal interest in the maintenance of their wardrobe, and every Mexican woman is an excellent seamstress or embroiderer.

It is interesting to note just here that in Mexico, somewhat in contrast to other lands, it is the young unmarried women who receive most of the attention, and the young matron is relegated immediately upon her marriage to the rank of her mother and grandmother, so that she is seldom seen again at social affairs except seated with the chaperones and accompanied by her husband.

Much of the social life of the women in Mexico is taken up in promenades or carriage and motor rides, the hold of tradition being so great that even today prominent Mexican families maintain their horses and carriages for the afternoon promenade, while using automobiles for every other purpose. In the smaller towns the life about the main plaza is part of the routine of social activity. Two or three evenings a week and every Sunday afternoon the band plays and the public walks around, the women and children accompanied by men in one direction, and the single men in another; in some

places there are four lines passing simultaneously, two made up of the middle and upper classes, and two of the peon and servant classes, but in each the women walk one way and the men another, so that they are able to speak and smile if they are acquainted or to watch each other, presumably unobserved, if they have not been formally presented.

It is here that Mexican romances traditionally begin. The Mexican girl has been trained from the cradle to discretion, and as a corollary to extreme skill in flirtation. Under the eye of a watchful duenna she will pass and repass a certain young man upon the plaza a dozen times and each time will flash a smile from the eyes in response to his equally covert salutation. When, after a few or many evenings upon the plaza, the youth finally separates himself from his companions and follows her home, she will, before she retires, step to the window and look out through the curtain to see him standing against the wall of the house across the street. Later she will let him see that she is watching, and before very long this "playing the bear" has developed to a conversation through the parlor window.

This window has been barred from ancient times, presumably to keep thieves from entering, because it opens directly upon the street, but perhaps more likely in order to lengthen the Mexican romance with its tantalizing nearness. This phase of the romance—conversation and hand-holding through the bars into the late hours of the night—continues for two or three months at least, sometimes much

longer. Then either the father or uncle of the young man, or sometimes one of his boy friends, approaches the father of the girl, explaining the young man's prospects and possessions and requesting permission for him to pay her formal court. If accepted, he is brought to the house by his ambassador, is formally presented, first to the father, then to the girl's mother and aunts. Finally he is introduced to the girl as if he had never known her before, for in theory he has not. Thereafter the courtship is carried on under the eyes of the family, although sometimes, if the chaperone is kindly, there are moments when they are alone within the house; but usually the only privacy the two have is through the bars at the street window at which he still stops on his way home after the formal call; and the family or some member of it is always in the room, even when the girl is talking to her *novio*, or sweetheart, through the bars as he stands on the street.

All this is the result of rigid custom, although with the somewhat greater freedom now allowed in the attendance of young girls, properly chaperoned, at general dances, the possibilities for acquaintance are greatly widened. Marriage follows close upon the formal "introduction" and encouragement of the young people. To the marriage the girl of good family sometimes—but not always—brings a dowry. The young man, on the other hand, defrays the entire expenses of the ceremony down to the bride's very trousseau; in the selection of this it is perhaps unnecessary to explain that he is

usually assisted by his sister, mother or aunt. The wedding is as elaborate as the groom can afford and is always followed by an extensive party in which all the relatives of both sides, not to mention the *compadres* and their families, take part. In Mexico the upper classes are married both by civil and religious ceremony, the former taking place either at the office of the judge the day before the marriage or made a part of the wedding reception.

After a Mexican woman is married her life almost inevitably assumes the daily round through which her mother and her grandmother and her great-grandmother have passed before her. Children are expected and come with the regularity of each new year, their christenings and later their confirmations being the chief events of their mother's life, although as Mexico is a Catholic country the christening, of course, takes place before the mother is able to attend. The first christening is the occasion when the friendships of the father's youth are sealed by inviting his best friends to act as godparents, the baptism being followed by an elaborate festival and announced afterwards by cards sent out by the godfather and always accompanied by a coin of gold or silver emblematic of comfort and the assurance of support to the godchild.

Life in Mexico is full of quaint customs, the festivals which mark the Church year and which celebrate the historic anniversaries of the nation all having their special functions and ceremonies. Birthdays, saints' days and family anniversaries of every sort are generously celebrated, and seldom

is a proper occasion allowed to pass without a *tertulia* or "party."

The ingenuousness of the lower classes and the simplicity and directness of the Mexicans of every rank knit their daily routine to custom and appropriateness. Why should the milkman not drive his cow or his herd of goats to your door and deliver their product first-hand into your own pitcher? Why should not the Indian or peon passing your window in the morning sing improvised chants or folk songs as he goes to his work? Why should the vendor of hot rolls on the corner not cry aloud in his singsong voice the virtues of his wares and the important fact that his stock will soon be exhausted? Why should the seller of sweetmeats, as he dusts the flies away with a dirty wisp of paper, or as he unhygienically freshens his slices of coconut in the public fountain, not inform you that never did he have such toothsome delicacies? Why should the bootblack on the plaza not insist that you have your well-blacked shoes shined once more because it is Sunday? Since time immemorial he and his father and his ancestors before him have used the same formulas, and always the occasion or the product has justified his noisy if conventional enthusiasm. Simplicity and fitness to purpose,—if we look deep enough we shall always find some ancient or present justification for every custom the world over.

Custom, which marked the Mexican from before his birth, follows him to the grave. The elaborateness of the marriage and the baptismal ceremony

are rivaled by the grandness of his funeral. This is almost the only occasion upon which every Mexican can be induced to hurry. Most Mexican cities require burial within twenty-four hours, for embalming is expensive and uncommon. Therefore the moment the eyes of the dead are closed, a near-by printshop is busy turning out immense black-bordered notices giving the hour of death, the arrangements for the funeral and the place of burial. These are in the post within a few hours and are often plastered up at the corners of the street. Burial is usually from a church or chapel, and in Mexico City and in most of the larger towns the trip to the cemetery is made by horse-car or trolley. The profuseness of Mexico's flowers and the skill of her workmen in fashioning out of green boughs and moss the most elaborate funeral designs make the black-draped trolley car which carries the body of a well-beloved citizen a bower of blossoms. Only men attend funerals in Mexico, and under Mexican law no clergyman may officiate out of doors, so there is acere mony not only in church but also in the mortuary chapel in the cemetery. Among the poorer classes coffins and even shrouds are rented, and even if the body is not to be disturbed, at least the silver handles are removed from all caskets before they are lowered into the ground. Graves can be rented for from one year to seven (at the end of which time the bones are taken out and thrown into a charnel house) or bought in perpetuity.

The Mexican "wake" among the lower classes

is no less a ceremony than the actual burial,—although it is almost certain to lack its solemnity. Food and drink are always given, and where the latter prevails, the traditional Irish function has an enthusiastic rival in the Mexican.

Thus the cycle of custom rolls around. Nothing interferes with a festival, as nothing interrupts the immemorial traditions of baptism, courtship and death. The Mexican's life, his business, his revolutions have a thousand individualities, and the background before which he plays his rôles may itself seem a moving kaleidoscope. But that background is custom and tradition, painted through long centuries, a background that repeats itself as it runs on an endless roll behind the stage upon which he acts out his days, a background whose unchanging sequence colors all his thought and feeling.

CHAPTER IV

PLAYTIME IN MEXICO

ALL the world must play, every people in its own peculiar fashion. The play of Mexico is ever the play of children, its color the color of ancient folk dances, a round of traditional ceremony, and yet, one comes to feel, tragically lacking in that very spirit of play which vivifies the make-believe of childhood.

Play in Mexico comes in for serious consideration, rather than joyful coöperation. With other peoples, recreation is an index; with the Mexican peon, at least, it is all the sweets of life. Call it what we will—a spiritual relaxation, a getting away from the troubles that oppress and the poverty that weakens, or a happy forgetting of the cruelty that enslaves—recreation holds a place in Mexican life such as is found among few modern nations.

The need of those solemn festivals and stuffy recreations is the first and almost the only "spiritual" requirement of the average Mexican, while the official celebrations of the many holidays is as important a part of the government function as the maintenance of a police force. Oppressed and undeveloped peoples all find expression in distinctive recreations, for, scientifically considered, amusements represent "the instinctive and natural atti-

tude of mind as divorced from occupational habits; they also represent unrealized ideals and national memories."[1]

The persistence of the tendency to festivity in Mexico is marked everywhere,—in the many holidays, in the system of work and in religion; and almost the only remnants of Indian folk-culture are the dances and games which mark all native ceremonies. The Indian mind is so tenacious of tradition that even after four hundred years many pagan rites have survived as virtually a part of Christian ritual. Even the celebration of Guadalupe Day (December 12) at the famous shrine in a suburb of the capital is accompanied by dances of undoubted pagan origin and orgies which the Church can ignore but knows it is unwise to prohibit or seek to alter.

Even during the present series of revolutions, with all the suffering and starvation, the Mexicans have lost no opportunity to amuse themselves. The characteristic *fiestas* are observed with unabated enthusiasm, and if the tinsel is a little more tarnished and the sardine cans a little less numerous, the celebration of all the national and religious holidays has gone on unchecked.

From the beginning of Mexican history these amusements have been recorded and described. Bernal Diaz, the chronicler of the Conquest, and Cortez himself, in his letters, described the wonderful sights which greeted their eyes on the weekly

[1] W. I. Thomas, "Race Psychology," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1912, page 758.

market days in Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital. The Spaniards, themselves lovers of the festival, found it pleasant to graft their own customs upon those of the Indians. The conquerors built parks and recreation centers, bull rings, band stands, gambling halls, and most powerful of all, established drinking places upon a firm financial basis. The native race responded to this phase of the enthusiasm of the Spaniard, and in this matter the mixed breed has never felt any confusion in his heritages.

The attitude of the Mexican toward a holiday celebration, however, is to regard it in the nature of a spectacle, rather than as a function in which he himself takes part. This is particularly true when the amusements are of Spanish origin. The Indian stands silent and sodden before the bandstands, under fireworks and along the lines of march of the pageants of his rulers, and although the heavy state of intoxication which is part of his celebration must be taken into account, this does not explain, of itself, why he is solemn rather than noisy during the great national festivals. Enjoyment there is, of course; the thousands of people of the lowest classes who turn out for every holiday indicate that, but their natural rôle of gloomy aloofness comes chiefly from the feeling that they have no part in the provisions which are made for their amusement.

In the country, or where the Indian is himself the dispenser of the entertainment, we find an increasing proportion of the spectators either taking an active part or commenting freely and humor-

ously upon the activities of the principals. For another thing, in the country the liquor imbibed is very likely to be of a more exhilarating character than in the capital, where *pulque* creates a "convivial" spirit which is sullen and quiet.

The hold of amusement on the Mexican mind was early recognized by the nation's leaders, and as in the old days of Rome, festivals were the ordinary form of bribing the simple populace. Under the Aztecs, there were royal feasts, consisting of "theatrical representations, gladiatorial combats, fights between wild beasts, athletic sports, musical performances, and poetical recitations in honor of kings, gods and heroes."[1]

In fact, the *fiestas* of the ancient Mexicans sound for all the world like a record of those to-day.

> Birthdays, victories, housewarmings, successful voyages or speculations were celebrated by feasts. . . . The feasting custom was general from lowest to highest. It usually involved the distribution of gifts (dresses, gourds, cacao beans, flowers, etc.), often costly. There were also long and frequent religious celebrations. . . . They feasted on fish, dogs, fowls, *tamales*, bread, cacao. . . . They smoked tobacco. . . . Old people were allowed all the *octli* they wanted and frequently became drunk. They were entertained by dancers, dwarfs, and jesters. . . . Dancing was the favorite amusement and was part of the religious rites. . . . Great public dances were participated in by thousands in the plaza or courtyard of the temple.[2]

The entertainment of the populace by great public fêtes has come down through all Mexican history,

[1] H. H. Bancroft, "Native Races of the Pacific States of North America," Volume II, page 286, San Francisco, 1883.

[2] *Ibid.*, 283–288.

and the period of Diaz, in the wisdom of his attitude toward the Indians, was one of the most lavish. All the national holidays were great occasions, decorations, parades, band concerts and fireworks marking each of them, year after year. The electrical illumination of the Zocalo, the main plaza of Mexico City, was as elaborate for each feast day as though it were a world's fair. The national and municipal palaces and the vast, towering bulk of the great cathedral were outlined in incandescent globes, while an immense Mexican flag, in green, white and red electric lights, flickered significantly over the vaulted dome of the ancient temple of religion.

Under the rule of Spain, the number of Church festivals which were celebrated by general holidays so increased that one of the most radical provisions of the Reform Laws was that which reduced them to only six,—besides Sundays. Under Diaz, with the addition of new national holidays, the number again grew to uneconomic proportions, until in 1906 the National Railways issued a special order recognizing, in its capacity of chief industry of the country, but fourteen, besides Sundays, as follows:

January 1—New Year's Day
February 5—Signing of the Constitution
March or April—Holy Thursday (a movable feast)
March or April—Good Friday (a movable feast)
May 5—Victory of Puebla
May or June—Corpus Christi (a movable feast)
June 24—St. John (the Baptist)
August 15—Assumption Day
September 15—Birthday of the President

September 16—Independence Day
November 1—All Saints
November 2—All Souls
December 12—Guadalupe Day
December 25—Christmas Day

But the legal and Church festivals are far from completing the list which the Mexican peon, at least, wishes to observe. Humorists who include San Lunes, or St. Monday's day as a festival (owing to the weekly need of recuperating from the alcoholic celebration of Sunday) estimate that the Mexican works not more than two hundred days in the year. Counting all the Sundays and, as above, all the Mondays of the year, all the national holidays, all the Church feast days, all the feast days formerly observed by the Church, the day of the patron saint of the hacienda where he works, the days of the patron saints of near-by churches and villages, the birthdays and also the saints' days of the owner of the hacienda, of his overseer, and of all the members of their families, the peon's own birthday and saint's day, those of the members of his family and friends, it sometimes seems as if even two hundred were too generous an estimate of his working period.

Since the new revolution some of the legal holidays, notably the birthday of President Diaz, September 15, are no longer celebrated as such, though the Mexican is very loath to give up an opportunity for a festival, no matter what the excuse. Under Diaz, for instance, April 2, the anniversary of a minor engagement at Puebla of which General Diaz

was the personal hero, was celebrated largely as an honor to the dictator, but this celebration has now been substituted by the anniversaries of many battles notable in the revolutions of the past ten years.

The religious holidays, which are limited in the railway calendar to seven, actually numbered, under the Diaz period, seventy-nine, besides Sundays. Fifty-two were saints' days, fifteen solemn feast days, three Holy Days of Obligation, and six formal festivals.

The New Year is observed chiefly with its European significance of the exchange of gifts and calls. Carnival Tuesday, preceding the beginning of Lent, is generally celebrated throughout Mexico, and in the capital it is the occasion for the Battle of Flowers, when carriages and automobiles passing each other slowly up and down the main streets and in the park of Chapultepec are loaded with cut flowers with which the occupants pelt one another joyously. At night, in the happy days when carriages might go abroad at night, the Battle of Flowers was continued along Calle San Francisco (now Avenida de Francisco I. Madero), residents of the upper floors joining in the battle from their balconies.

The celebration of Easter is marked by the first general appearance in the year of the booths or *puestos* lining the parks and market places. These booths are more typical of Mexico and of the Indian contribution than almost any integral part of the celebrations themselves, excepting, of course, the dances. Here, under spreading canvas, bunting or

matting awnings, are displayed trinkets and toys made of native pottery and basketry, tissue paper and papier-mâché. The Indians of outlying villages have spent months in making these trinkets and days in bringing them on foot to the cities and larger towns, packed in great crates upon their backs. All are accompanied by their entire families, with whom they set up housekeeping in the booths themselves, so that the gaudy display of wares takes place in an atmosphere of savory cooking and tumbling Indian babies. Each of the half-dozen festival periods when the booths are erected has its distinctive toys and trinkets. The Easter *puestos* are filled not only with religious images, but also with gaudy and terrible-visaged dolls representing Judas, the betrayer. These images, usually of papier-mâché, are supposed to be hung and destroyed at noon on Holy Saturday when the Passion ends.

At nightfall on Holy Thursday the church bells become silent, the devout Mexicans put on complete mourning, and the streets become silent. No church bells ring until noon on Saturday, at which time in the capital the great bell of the Cathedral booms out and starts the pandemonium which is carried from church to church as the bells break out in violent and most unmusical noise. At this moment the Judases are strung up, many from the balconies of business buildings and along the main streets, firecrackers and explosives within the larger ones burst them into pieces, and the crackling and explosion of the images adds to the clamor of the bells. In their explosion the Judases scatter abroad

sweetmeats and cakes, bread and pennies, for which the populace scrambles with glee, an appreciation not alone of the symbolic revenge upon the betrayer. The celebration of Holy Week is not always confined to the destruction of Judases and the ceremonies of the Church. Certain villages have traditional celebrations of the Passion, in which a play, including even the crucifixion itself, is given by local devotees. In fact, there have been occasions when these local Passion Plays have gone so far as actual crucifixion, the result of a religious fanaticism which appears from time to time in various sections of Mexico as well as in other countries. Aside from the fanatical phases, however, these local Passion Plays are usually extremely ludicrous and yet illuminating in their demonstration of the Indian conception of the Christian story.

Corpus Christi, which falls in May or June, is usually a Church festival of great pomp, but as there are now no religious street processions in Mexico, the spectacular features are not so evident as they were in older days.

A typical Mexican festival is the celebration of the day of St. Peter and St. Paul in June, when the devil is supposed to roam abroad. This is very largely a children's festival, and little papier-mâché or pottery devils are distributed, together with toy swords and pistols with which the children promptly annihilate the images of their arch enemy.

The feast of St. John the Baptist, on June 24, is noted as the one day upon which all Mexicans take a bath. It may well be that the Indian and peon

of the plateau do not bathe throughout the year, but this religious festival is observed not only in spirit but in the letter, with a scrubbing more or less effective, although the locale of the ceremonial is not at a religious shrine, and the rivers and the public bathhouses are crowded from dawn until midnight.

The celebration of the 16th of September, the anniversary of the cry of Dolores when the priest Hidalgo roused the Indians against the Spaniards in 1810, is the great national festival, the second in importance being May 5, the anniversary of the victory over the French at Puebla. Both are always celebrated by military parades, band concerts and fireworks.

The double festival of All Saints' and All Souls' Days, November 1 and 2, is one of the occasions when the booths again appear along the edges of the markets and parks, and when trinkets typical of the season are sold. Skeletons, grimly humorous coffins, toys and specially made cakes and sweetmeats are for sale. Theoretically the Mexican uses the latter to decorate the graves of his dead. Thousands make a pilgrimage, on November 1, to the cemeteries,where they follow an ancient custom of placing food and drink and gifts upon the graves so that the spirits who are to return to earth upon the morrow may have human comforts on their journey.

December 12, the day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, is celebrated throughout Mexico, and also on the twelfth of each month special pilgrimages from dis-

tant States come to the capital to visit the shrine. The celebration of this festival at the suburb of Guadalupe is marked with innumerable picturesque and significant features. Hundreds of the worshipers who are camped about in the streets of the village and in the fields surrounding it climb to the summit of the hill upon their knees. Other hundreds drink the waters of the miraculous spring which still flows from the side of the sacred hill, and the trade in empty beer bottles in which to transport the holy water home is brisk and lucrative.

The Guadalupe church and its many chapels are crowded from morning until late at night, and services are continuous, not only on the Holy Day itself, but before and after it. The draperies and banners of the interior of the church are spangled with new silver and gold offerings, medals or representations of various portions of the anatomy, arms and legs and heads, as votive offerings accompanied by prayers for recovery from disease. Many miraculous cures are reported during each of the annual celebrations and a great pile of crutches and canes in a sacristy room is tangible proof thereof.

Outside, the streets are lined with booths where food, medals and pictures are sold. On Guadalupe Day in particular tiny reproductions of the Virgin surrounded by diminutive glistening mirrors are disposed of by the booth holders. It is amusing—or shocking—to some to find these mirror-encased pictures of the Virgin forming the headdresses of the dancers in the pagan rites which are carried on in the very shadow of the church to the music of

drum and fife suggestive of the savage dances of all primitive peoples.

The Christmas celebrations follow hard on Guadalupe Day, for Christmas in Mexico is celebrated for nine days, with the culmination on Christmas Eve. The booths are filled with images of the Christ Child, of the Holy Family and the Magi. In addition the entire fund of imagination and tradition of the Indian is called upon for the production of toys and whistles, dolls, bonbons and everything which can give joy to a Mexican child. These trinkets are bought by the dozen and with sweetmeats and bits of sugar cane go to fill the tall earthen pots decorated with papier-mâché and tissue paper which are called *piñatas*. The *piñatas* are the Mexican Christmas trees and besides the cheap gifts which are to be bought at the *puestos*, are often stuffed with valuable presents and money. The *piñatas* are strung up at the Christmas parties, and in succession each child, blindfolded, is given a club and has a chance to break the earthen jug, upon which consummation the entire company joins in a joyous scramble for the presents. Theoretically the *piñata* is broken only on Christmas Eve, but throughout the entire nine days of the Christmas celebration *piñata* parties are held by all classes.

The nine-day celebration is usually carried out by nine families, the entire company gathering on succeeding evenings in different houses. A procession with a brief ceremony is the solemn part of the festivity, the nine-day celebration being in memory of the nine days' journey of Joseph and Mary to

Bethlehem. Each night the Holy Family, represented by images carried by guests, asks in rhyme for shelter, and each night it is refused, until Christmas Eve, when, with an image of the Christ Child, they finally find their only refuge in a stable, fitted up more or less elaborately and with more or less beautiful figures. Each evening ends in a dance and supper, the most elaborate being that of Christmas Eve, or the *Noche Buena* (Blessed Night), when the entire nine families are guests at the house of the family which can entertain them best.

In the celebration of the religious holidays in Mexico, one can invariably trace the pagan survivals, while in the celebration of the national holidays one finds relics of Aztec and Spanish royal festivals. In essence the Mexican feast days, however, are very much alike, whether they be the celebration of Guadalupe Day, of the Mexican Independence, or of a local holy day before a village shrine. Always there are the little booths where the Indians of outlying villages come to sell their trinkets, their sweetmeats, their potteries and their baskets to the holiday makers. Always there is music and always there are dances. The strange conglomeration of European and Indian ideas may be of interest to the archæologist, but the Indian and the peon and the Mexican small boy and little girl find in them all the thrilling enjoyment which belongs only to childhood, either of race or of years.

There are innumerable local festivals and special celebrations of a religious nature which can be traced back to Indian custom and usually to certain

traditions of the Church itself. The instance which comes to mind is the blessing of the animals on the day of St. Anthony the Abbot, when in the doorway of the church dedicated to this saint burros, cows, sheep and pigs, parrots and cats are brought to receive a sprinkling of holy water and a brief benediction from the priest. That this custom is an inheritance by the good St. Anthony from some Aztec god seems beyond question, and priests newcome from Spain or Italy are frank in their shocked surprise over the literalness of many of the celebrations in which they are called upon to take part.

The attitude of the Mexican toward the *fiesta* has not, however, been exaggerated by most of those who have recorded such incidents as this. The fact that a miniature strike can be created in almost any industry by telling the peons that a festival is being celebrated in a near-by town, is humorous enough, but is unfortunately literally true. The slightest excuse is sufficient for a festival, and the excuse is sought as often as the American small boy seeks an excuse to go to a ball game, or to play hookey from school. No employer can safely refuse permission to his peons to celebrate his own birthday, nor indeed that of his wife or his daughter, nor that of his son, nor the baptism of his baby, so that the number of festivals celebrated in any Mexican community is in direct ratio to the information and inventiveness of the inhabitants.

The personal feast day, whether that of an employer whose peons erect a shaky arch of flowers before his doorway and disturb his slumbers with

dolorous music, or that of a child, a parent or *compadre*, takes on the nature of a true *fiesta*. Usually it is the saint's day or *onomástico* that is celebrated, with a party, with gifts both to and from the honored individual, and with the formal felicitations of his friends. The birthday, although not always celebrated with a feast, is remembered with cards and congratulations and is referred to glowingly as the *cumpleaños* (literally the "achievement of years") or as one's "day of days."

The Mexican's amusements and recreations take myriad forms other than the formal *fiesta* and its accompaniments. Bullfights, cockfights, gambling and intoxication are balanced against music of every sort, social dancing, the theater and athletics. The cruelty of the amusements typical to Mexico has been the subject of many diatribes. The bullfight and the cockfight are undoubtedly an expression of a certain savagery not confined merely to the Indian, but coming from both his Spanish and his indigenous strains. In the great days of the bullfights, the immense arena of Mexico City, where fifteen thousand spectators could be seated, was the scene of magnificent gatherings of society as well as of the common people of the land. The goring of the horses, perhaps the most disagreeable portion of the battle, was looked upon with equanimity, although the only applause which the riders received was when they skilfully avoided allowing their poor mounts to be caught on the horns of the bull. With a particularly powerful bull, however, it was considered necessary, in order to tire the bull,

to allow him to kill several horses. The handling of the bull itself was a matter of skill and daring, and there was little bloodshed except by the one skilful stroke between the shoulder blades by an able matador. In the country, on the other hand, and in the hands of amateurs, the bullfights are very likely to reach a most disgusting depth of butchery, and the enjoyment is confined almost alone to the pleasure of seeing blood flow.

Another feature of the bullfighting which is too often overlooked by the moralists who have inveighed against it is the matter of the mere baiting of the bull. The cruelty inflicted upon the animal by his rage is seldom spoken of, and even to-day the Mexican festivals on the farms where a young bull is chased and beaten from the walls of an improvised arena, tired out, kicked and finally thrown, and ultimately ridden by daring cowboys, is a phase of cruelty to the animal which is in some ways more degrading to the spectators than witnessing a skilful bullfight by trained masters.

Cockfighting is a thoroughly gladiatorial combat, the occasion for heavy betting and almost inevitable death to at least one of the contestants. The birds, bred and trained for the battle, fight with gaffs of razorlike sharpness from three to four inches long, and the conqueror of a spirited fight is often as near dead as his antagonist. Aside from its cruelty to the animal, cock-fighting is significant chiefly as an outlet for the gambling instinct, for it is always the occasion for bets and wagers sometimes running into large figures.

Gambling is, indeed, one of the true "recreations" of the Mexican people; its various forms, Aztec and Spanish, tempt creole, mestizo and Indian alike, although (perhaps because they have more spare change) it is considered a vice of white and mestizo particularly. In this connection one cannot omit listing the recreational features of drinking, smoking and sex, all of which rank as amusements as well as among the true national vices. Few Mexicans of the lower classes consider them as anything but recreation, and none of any class would consider their omission from that category justified.

Of the milder forms of personal amusement and recreation the most thoroughly Mexican is perhaps the promenade. Since colonial times, at least, all Mexicans have found much pleasure and satisfaction in walks and rides abroad. Under the viceroys the upper classes rode forth, the men on horseback (often in native costume), the ladies in generous victorias drawn by beautiful horses. In the palmy days of Diaz this custom had grown to an institution, and each afternoon, and on Sunday mornings as well, the most beautiful equipages bearing the most beautiful women of the capital drove slowly up and down San Francisco Street between rows of gaping bystanders, and after an hour (at sunset in the afternoon) drove briskly away and out the beautiful Paseo de la Reforma to the park and restaurant of Chapultepec, a miniature and beautiful Bois de Boulogne.

On Sunday mornings the more conventional of

the older families and hosts of the middle and lower classes had their promenade on foot, the center being, in the capital, the beautiful Alameda, where the finest bands of the country played to great throngs who walked or sat in the shaded parks. These customs find their replica, in minor, in all the cities and towns of the republic.

The social intercourse of Mexican families of the middle and upper classes is very likely to be a tremendous affair, following as it does the heavy round of tradition. Calls are exchanged by the ladies, but the men and the children are invariably included in the evening parties, or *tertulias*. These are magnificent occasions whenever they are arranged, and the intercourse of families is almost entirely confined to this form of amusement which even the Mexicans find extremely "stuffy." The women become acquainted through long and formal calls (one hour being the proper length), and if their husbands meet also outside the formal parties, the natural development is a *dia del campo*, or "day in the country", the one informal affair in the Mexican social calendar.

With the upper classes this is a visit to the hacienda of one, with a great country meal in its cool halls or else a barbecue of a kid in the open air. The *dia del campo* is not, however, confined to the upper class, but is distinctly and elaborately observed by every grade of Mexican society. Sunday is the great festival day, beginning with a trip, if possible, even if it be no more than a voyage in a scow hired from an Indian market gardener, its

climax an elaborate meal served under the trees or bought at an outdoor restaurant. The *dia del campo* is sure to end in a dance, a form of amusement—an exercise be it said—to which the Mexican is exceedingly partial.

Aside from the careful and not to say elaborate chaperonage which surrounds the Mexican social function, dancing is extremely popular, for it gives definite opportunity for intercourse between the young members of the two sexes, especially when connected with a *dia del campo*. Wherever two or three families are gathered, then, the dance may be very informal, usually to the music of two or three Indian bandsmen upon whatever instruments they may have at hand.

The theater has long been well regarded in Mexico, occupying relatively an even higher place in the life of the people than the theater in the United States or England. Yet the number of troupes traveling over the country has always been small, and in the days before motion pictures, many of the most important cities of the country had good drama only for very brief seasons each year. Notwithstanding this fact, almost every city of prominence had built itself a magnificent theater, the energy which in the colonial times went to the construction of churches being devoted in the time of Diaz to the erection of theaters. There have been very good actors in Mexico City, but the drama has never taken the form that it has in other countries where long seasons of a single play are the reward of a successful production.

The Mexican theatrical organization is inevitably a stock company, and each season the seats are subscribed for in much the same way as opera seats are taken elsewhere, so that in order to satisfy the exactions of an audience which comes regularly the producers have to change their plays so often that the best of Mexican companies, even in the capital, repeat over and over certain of the Spanish classics, and seldom, except on special occasions, give a native play or a new and untried European success. This continuous change, combined with generally poor stage direction, is responsible for the chief bane of the Mexican theater, the prompter. Hidden or partially hidden behind his hood in the middle of the stage, he can be heard over almost all the theater giving the lines before they are voiced by the player and successfully destroying all the illusions of the stage.

During the days of Diaz there was each year at least one season of excellent opera, usually given by an Italian company which had traveled in South America or in the West Indies, the government paying a handsome subsidy for these performances. Under Carranza a similar effort was made, but without approaching the general high level of the seasons previous to 1911.

The most popular of Mexican theatrical amusements, however, are the *zarzuelas*, or Spanish one-act farces. Spanish as well as native actors and dancers appear at the various theaters where the *zarzuela* holds sway. The type of performance given is comparable to nothing which is known in the

United States or England, with the possible exception of a similarity in some ways to the playlets which are parts of the vaudeville or variety show. Each of the four acts or *tandas* of a *zarzuela* performance is a separate play in which, however, practically the entire caste takes part. Tickets are sold separately for each, so that one may either buy a seat for the entire evening or may buy a *tanda* and enjoy the show for half an hour. Such road companies as exist in Mexico give *zarzuelas*, but include also in their reportory dramas and farces filling a whole evening.

Motion-picture theaters have now sprung up all over the country and have, as in other lands, brought entertainment to those who formerly lived lives of almost complete provincial seclusion. The French and Italian films are the most popular, although the American companies, especially during the war, fitted up prints of their productions with Spanish titles for Mexican and other Latin-American consumption. European motion-picture dramas, however, are preferred. although the American comedians of the slap-stick variety and the serial "thrillers" are perhaps the most profitable films exhibited in Mexico. It is interesting that the serial films which are produced for a weekly feature of about two reels over several months in American motion-picture houses are shown in Mexico complete in one sitting, so that forty reels will be run off in two sessions of a single day, one admission price being charged, an intermission of an hour

being given for the audience to go home to dinner between 7 and 8 o'clock.

Aside from the theaters and such receptions and balls as occur from time to time, there is comparatively little night life in Mexico. In happier times there were cafés of the European type which were much frequented, but one by one they died out for want of patronage, some of the most famous and historical having passed during the Diaz régime. The restaurants which are almost the sole successors to the old cafés were often characterful and popular in the capital, but in the provinces, even including such large cities as Monterey and Guadalajara, restaurant and café life is almost entirely absent. Even in Mexico City restaurants do not keep late hours, there have never been any cabarets, and there is seldom any entertainment save the music of the orchestra with an occasional singer. Closing laws were enforced under Diaz with considerable rigidity, saloons closing at 10 P.M. and restaurants at 1 A.M., and the uncertain police conditions since the revolution have made the people's caution their own curfew.

The Mexican clubs, or "casinos", differ little from similar organizations elsewhere, but they do definitely take the place of the café life of European cities and towns. They are usually limited to men of the upper classes, and are far more social than sociable, although the great clubs of the capital were, in the time of Diaz, elaborate, and popular with their members.

Athletics, as a form of recreation, are almost

solely of foreign origin, and have come but slowly to Mexico. The Mexican does not take kindly to, nor does he usually play well, games which involve contest. He is a bad loser and to this psychological trait can probably be traced the fact that he is very likely to cheat. To him, the contest is one of his brains against the others' and, as we have seen, his sense of honor is largely concerned with maintaining his prestige rather than retaining the respect of his fellows.

American and English games are rather too strenuous, also, for the Mexican climate. Baseball, however, had a growing popularity, when there were many Americans in the capital, and some of the best players on the local amateur teams were Mexican boys of the upper class. The game was taken up, also, by Mexican teams, and, despite the departure of foreigners, there were, in 1921, six baseball leagues in the Republic. About thirty teams belonged, and practically all the players were Mexicans. A magnificent beginning has thus been made in the training of Mexican boys both in teamwork and in athletic development. The English games of cricket and association football have long been played in Mexico by the British, and football at least has received some attention and Mexican teams have been organized during the annual season. Polo was played by the upper-class Mexicans as well as by the English and Americans and some good native players were developed, although the best were always men who learned the game abroad. Bowling has grown somewhat in favor in Mexico

among the Mexicans and perhaps a dozen bowling alleys exist in the capital, but as a whole the game's cousins, billiards and pool, appeal more to the intellectual attitude of the Mexicans. Horseback riding has always been popular in Mexico, and Mexicans are famous riders in almost every class. Golf and tennis have attracted hardly a handful of Mexicans in the twenty years that both have been known there.

The Young Men's Christian Association has had an interesting influence in Mexico. Introduced first through the Mexican Central Railway for its American employees, the organization later established native branches and trained native secretaries and athletic instructors. The work spread rapidly over the country, and although some of the branches were closed under Carranza, their popularity was such that they were revived when times began to improve. There were large classes in the gymnasiums, and a real start was made in track athletics. Baseball was especially encouraged, and basket ball and boxing, as well as track work, also gained headway. Basket ball has even been played by girls in some of the private schools of the capital.

The Y. M. C. A. and the foreigners have been the chief influence in athletic development in Mexico, but as far back as 1900 physical exercises were ordered in the government schools. These were supposed to be of a hygienic rather than athletic character and consisted of gymnastic work and fencing. This was expanded in some of the higher institutions, notably the National Military

Academy, to weight-lifting, drilling with heavy bars, dumb-bells, etc. A craze for fencing came in after the Madero revolution and Italian masters were brought over to instruct the students in the higher public schools.

There are, moreover, certain native forces tending to build up the athletic life of Mexico. Among some of the Indians wrestling is a popular sport, and the interest in athletic exhibitions, where the Mexican formerly looked on, has often led to his regarding them as possible opportunities for his own playing. One of these games is *pelota*, as it is called in Mexico (*Jai-alai* elsewhere), the Basque sport of playing a ball against three walls and the pavement with terrific force, throwing and catching it in a basket attached to the arm. It is comparable only to lacrosse, which its athletic features somewhat resemble. Mexicans at one time found this sport interesting, not only as a gambling opportunity, but also as something that they themselves could learn and play. It is, however, an extremely violent game and no one can safely play it who is not in the pink of condition. The same may be said of bull-fighting which at one time was a popular amateur sport with those who could afford it.

As a people, however, the Mexicans are not athletic and probably never will be, for the climate is decidedly against all violent exercise and exacts an undue toll even from normal exertion. Only on its psychological side can athletics be considered of vital importance,—in the development of team-

work and sportsmanship and in the encouragement of participation instead of observation merely. It seems that these features are being developed by baseball, which there, as elsewhere, has stimulated the sense of play and is certainly as near a "national sport" as Mexico has so far attained.

Again, however, the amusements of this people must be noted at their face value, for what they actually are and not for what they may attain or what a few individuals have achieved. By this standard Mexico's recreations are but reflexes of her past and of her desires for the present, simple, childlike, seeking pleasure and fun first, and quite without any understanding of the more complicated Anglo-Saxon conception that play is something that is "good for you."

CHAPTER V

MEXICAN CULTURE

THE standards of Mexican culture are Spanish, but Spain's domination of its outward manifestations does not penetrate so deeply as appears at first blush. The tools with which Mexican art has been created are almost uniformly Indian. The architecture and indeed the graphic arts trace back to the Conquerors, but the handicraft, in all its glory and beauty of detail, is that of Indian workmen. Literature, education, religion are Spanish, chiefly, but again the product has been shaped by Indian thought, Indian living, Indian apathy. The relationship extends through all Mexican life, but nowhere is the deep, sullen, yet often beautiful and lovable Indian strain more obvious than on the cultural plane.

This is important in our understanding of Mexican mentality, and its divergences carry us back directly to the difference in race and in the stages of cultural civilization. The Aztecs lived in an era of human sacrifices, of cannibalism, and of rulers to whose despotic cruelties they had been accustomed to submit themselves for unchanging ages. Their government was a theocracy, their culture expressed in picture-writing, in astrology and in

folk-tales and mythology which place them in actuality on a parallel with European tribes of three thousand rather than one thousand years before the Conquest. Only in the arts of building and of luxury did their empire rank up in the scale.

The Spaniards brought with them to Mexico the highest culture of the Europe of their day. Energetic, progressive indeed, intensely religious, haughty and proud of their race and civilization, they met and conquered a people who were without firearms or military science, with relatively little cultural cohesion, a people servile, obedient and indolent, ruled and led to war only by despotic and predatory chieftains.

The triumph of the white man's culture was so absolute in outward seeming and the collapse of the Indian civilization so complete that it apparently brought all the Indians under the direct and immediate sway of Spain and the Church. For three hundred years only one culture prevailed in Mexico, and if it seems to-day as if Spain's greatest effect was the destruction of the intellectual as well as the material bases of Indian progress, we must realize that, after all, the very fact of the Aztecs' astonishing collapse is indicative, at least, of their inability to meet their crises.

Spain, however we may regard the causes, certainly dominated the culture of Mexico from the very moment of her triumph. A generation of Indian poets and artists, and the last trace of genius in the native race was gone. The language, the standards, the religion of Castile became Mex-

ican, but with all their many faults, these three did indeed furnish a stout harness for the turning of Indian power to the creation of the Mexico that we know. With Spain as the intellectual as well as the political master, the Indians became slaves even more completely culturally than they were physically.

This era continued down to the Independence, when a new element came to destroy one period of progress without creating a new. After the success of the revolution had been achieved by the creoles through the methods of the white man, the creoles were in turn driven out by the mestizos. In this political upheaval we find the first appearance of the mestizo culture, using culture in the definitive sense. This has manifested itself in the same intellectual hybridism, emotional chaos and rabid individualism that distinguishes the mestizo touch in all Mexico. Claiming a white heritage and maintaining a hazy contact with European thought, the mestizo discarded the paternal understanding of the Spaniard, destroyed such vestiges as remained of Indian cultural adaptation and began the masquerading of his ideals of personalism and destruction in an over-emphasis of his peculiar conception of the white man's progress. Throwing away what understanding of the Indian the Spanish régime had left to him, he began borrowing from Frenchman and German, from Englishman and American, this and that and the other idea of intellectual and political virtue. These he has adapted wholesale to Mexican problems with colossal misunderstanding both of

the culture which he borrowed and of the soil in which he has planted it. The mestizo "culture" is based upon the preconceived idea that Mexico must fit the mestizo's peculiar picture of a European community, whether she wishes it or not. A decadent Spanish feudalism, a hybrid French philosophy, an Indianized German socialism and a deep-tanned English empire building,—these the mestizo has combined with a crass imitation of American political organization and American industrialism to create the astonishing cultural mixture which has been the bane of his national and intellectual history.

The cultural problem of Mexico has indeed always been marked by the failure of the protagonists of the higher culture to seek any contact, save that of the opportunist, with the lower. Seldom, even at its wisest, did the Spanish rule of Mexico reach down to understand the Indian and by the Indian's own standards and virtues to raise him to a plane where he might meet the conditions of the modern world on anything like equal terms. Rather such success as the Spaniards had was due to elements within their own culture which made possible the needed adaptation to bend Indian power to the realization of their own ideals, and more than all else, the inherent if poorly expressed willingness of the white to help his darker brother to rise,—the one trait above all others which the half-breed does not inherit from his fair-skinned ancestor.

The Spaniards destroyed the arts of the Aztecs by the very process which to-day is the most potent

of all forces in Mexico,—substitution. How well developed that art was we cannot truly estimate, for practically all that is left of it are the stone ruins and idols, some thirty illuminated parchment scrolls or *codices*, a few examples of beautiful feather work, a very little carved jewelry, some crude pottery and some examples of fine weaving. Even the civilization of Gnossos has left more tangible proof of its rank, and in reality we have little more than the glowing tales of the conquerors (whose enthusiasms are exceeded only by the redoubtable Baron Munchausen) as evidence of the refinement and magnificence of the Aztec court.

There is no desire or need of belittling the wonderful architectural works of these interesting aborigines, or any possibility of discounting the greatness of their artistic achievements. But if, as we must, we judge the Indians of the pre-Hispanic era by the Indians of to-day, we are forced to the realization that then, as now, they were skilful imitators, beautiful craftsmen under direction, but as a people lacking in originality and true creative sense. Their aristocracies, succeeding each other, passing from hand to hand the torch of their knowledge, seem to have been the only true creators. Cortez's chroniclers say that the wonderful feather work, which was perhaps the highest artistic achievement after sculpture of the Mexican Indians, was a craft of the upper classes, who followed it as the court ladies of medieval Europe followed tapestry making. The architecture of this era, highly developed within decided limitations,

was apparently more massive than elegant, lacked constructive skill (even the arch was unknown), and was rigidly conventional. The sculpture, in finish close to perfection, was stiff and unimaginative, lacking in pictorial concept and usually in artistic proportion. The paintings which survive in the *codices* (which the Indians told Cortez were their most esteemed works of art) are crude, extremely conventional, without perspective and with little color appreciation. Of the jewelry work in gold and silver, we have practically nothing but the word of the conquerors, who were, as usual, most enthusiastic; the manufacture of the precious metals into jewels was early prohibited by the Crown, such wealth going direct to Spain in the form of bullion, and the much praised works of metallic art were themselves melted down whenever discovered.

All this is so at variance with the common conception that its statement seems crude and unappreciative. But it is rather taking the sensible viewpoint that the wonderful works of the Aztecs and their predecessors were noteworthy manifestations of a very high degree of barbaric culture, perhaps the most interesting and awe-inspiring relics on the Western Hemisphere. But by the self-imposed standards of those who praise them, they fail miserably to sustain the contention that the Aztecs had reached a high degree of true civilization. Wonderful but latent possibilities existed there, and no question can be raised (except climatically and racially) that this barbaric culture

might have developed, if left alone, into something worthy indeed of all that has been said in its praise.

Its greatest value, however, seems to be that which the Spaniards harnessed, the adaptive and understanding skill of the native artisan under intelligent direction. The Mexican Indian was—and is—a fine craftsman, and the Spaniards used this skill with not a little wisdom, in the creation of the most wonderful colonial architecture in the New World. The pity of it has been, then, not the imposition of European artistic standards, but the failure to develop Indian imitative ability and handicraft within those standards to an originality, a cultural force, which might long since have placed them firmly on their own feet. We do not indeed know that this could have been done, but the record of human and group crisis shows that when the crisis fails to develop adaptability, it tends to destroy the best in the old and to accept the worst in the new.

To-day, in studying the culture of Mexico, we face the facts alone, and those tell us that virtually every art, native and foreign, bears the mark of Spain. But Spanish art has had, since the days of the Moors, a peculiar trait unknown to any other artistic concept of Europe,—the trait of close identification with the soil of the land where it flourishes. Previous to the Renaissance, the art of Europe had definite roots in the soil. Egyptian, Greek and early Roman buildings and statues belong to the spots where they were made, maintain the contours of their landscapes, the colors of their

rocks and trees and flowers. With the Renaissance, seeking more the idea than the appropriate form, painting and architecture were cast in a new mold and slipped far away from the beauty of native colors and native outlines; this Renaissance spirit dominates Europe and America to-day and still stifles the expression, in form and material, of the individual place where it is created.

In Spain, on the other hand, there has, since the Moors, been an artistic identification with Spain itself. Moorish artisans, making annual pilgrimages to Mecca, there met and talked with Persian artists and received from them the basic conception of the unity of art with life and physical environment which made the artistic contributions to Spain of the Moors and of the Spaniards who followed the Moors so deep and beautiful a part of the identity of the land itself.[1]

All who have thrilled at the harmonized beauty of the Alhambra, and all who have gasped at the first sight of the cathedral of Toledo, towering above its hills like a pinnacle of its own rocky foundation, will realize, in recollection, their contrast with the jeweled but almost incongruous beauty of the Gothic cathedrals set on the flat plains in Northern France.

It was this spirit that dominated the artistic contribution of Spain in Mexico. The completeness of the harmonies of the great churches, towering as they do above the hovels of Mexican villages, their

[1] *Cf.* Wallace Thompson, "The Art of the Spaniard Anglada," *Fine Arts Journal*, Chicago, May, 1913.

tiled and colored domes glistening as though dreamed of only to catch and resolve like prisms the Mexican sunlight, the carved façades seemingly designed but to give glory to Mexican moonlight, sift into the heart of every observer. Instinctive it all must have been, and yet the perfection of the blending of Spanish architectural genius and Indian artisanship seems as if some colossal mind had planned, from the beginning of time, to use and unite these two forces. Indeed, not the least of the facts which crystallize to our appreciation of these mighty harmonies is the shock of the havoc which was wrought almost immediately after the Independence when a succession of Mexican architects and artists stripped so much of the beauty from the interiors and even the exteriors of Mexican churches to replace them with the ghastly "classical" Roman columns and whitewashed walls which are as foreign to Mexico as would be the ivied brick churches of rural England.

Not that the Spanish architecture of Mexico did not undergo many tribulations, but as we look on the innumerable treasures which the viceroys left as the greatest beauty of Mexico, always that harmony persists, always is there the identification with Mexico as she truly is, always the churches and the palaces belong to the spot where they stand,—belong with a completeness which age may have made more perfect, but which age did not create. The story of Mexican architecture cannot be told here, for it belongs solely to the historic past, but no one who would tell truth of Mexico and of her

culture can omit appreciation of these sublime monuments, monuments alike to beauty, to religion and to the true adaptation of Spain to the reality that she was able to find in Mexico.[1]

Of the native arts which are to-day entirely Indian, pottery-making easily ranks first. This, indeed, comes down directly from pre-Aztec times. Much the same forms, much the same colors and designs are made to-day as are dug up in prehistoric mounds. All Mexico, high and low, cooks in pottery vessels, glazed and finished, at least inside, and usually decorated with crude designs. But apparently glazing was unknown to the Indians before the Conquest, for the Dominican friars who assisted at the founding of the City of Puebla in 1532 sent to their monastery of Talavera de la Reina, near Toledo, Spain, for glazers among the brotherhood to come to Mexico and guide the native potters in the making of glazed tiles for the decoration of the Puebla churches. Of so comparatively recent a foundation is the most famous and esteemed pottery of Mexico, the "Mexican Talavera." From this activity, of the Spaniards again, came virtually all of the glazed tiling which so beautifies the churches and many of the famous old houses of Mexico.

The various designs of this majolica, in brilliant blues and yellows, are the mark of various epochs of the work, the oldest being the blue monochrome with white, heavily glazed but made entirely of

[1] *Cf.* Sylvester Baxter, "Spanish Colonial Architecture in Mexico," Boston, 1901.

native clay, brittle red within, soft white outside, the difference being in the degree of firing. Moorish, Spanish and Chinese designs were used in the earlier wares, and later, when yellow and sometimes a little red were added, the designs became more distinctly Mexican. The Mexican Talavera of colonial times is gathered into many collections and has a decided intrinsic value, though it is distinguished from the Spanish Talavera, which some of its designs imitated, by the fact that its blue is in appreciable relief, while the Spanish coloring is flat and thin.[1] Within the last century, the Talavera potteries, which had been virtually closed for many years, were reopened for the making of excellent imitations of the old work, imitations so good, in fact, that often only experts can distinguish the old from the new. The Talavera is chiefly found in tiles, often church domes apparently having been designed as a whole and worked out in matched pieces, although the usual type are tiles of ordinary size, roughly formed and crudely yet boldly designed. Washbasins, even bathtubs, and chief of all the tall cylindrical vases (originally designed for herbs and medicines, but now used for cut flowers) jardinières and flowerpots, platters, plates and cups are other forms still found sometimes in the antique and imitated in the modern.

Below the Talavera, the truer native types of pottery appear in profusion, but in designs and forms so distinct that one who knows Mexico can

[1] *Cf.* E. A. Barber, "Hispano-Moresque Pottery in the Collection of the Hispanic Society of America," New York, 1915.

distinguish the section—even the village—of their origin by form and color. The work is all done by hand, and the only tools are pieces of broken glass and a horsehair, the glass, straight or curved, being used to form the vessel, the hair to cut and trim the top. In many of the Mexican pottery villages wheels are unknown, the whole shaping of the vessels being by hand.

The pottery of Oaxaca, especially of the Ocho Pueblos, is the commonest sort used in cooking, being heavily glazed and manufactured in large quantities for the trade which was originally and to a large extent still is carried on by the potters themselves, immense crates being transported on human and burro-back for great distances. It is of dull red clay, but the glazes are of olive green, in two shades, one so dark as to give the general distinction of "green-and-black" to the product.

Cuernavaca, not far from Mexico City, has famous pottery works in its suburb of San Anton, the chief and almost the only product (outside of trinkets and toys for the tourist trade) being the typical Mexican water bottles of porous clay which by the seepage and evaporation of the water on the outside keep that within cool and fresh. Cuernavaca pottery is brittle, so does not lend itself to large pieces. The workers make designs (most traditional and conventional) in inlaid bits of glass, broken porcelain and pebbles. The pottery of Guanajuato is of the same dark terra-cotta color, but of a better quality than that of Cuernavaca and is used extensively all over Mexico; it dates from long before the

Spanish conquest. One pottery in this district, still in operation, was founded by the patriot-priest Hidalgo, he who roused the Indians of his parish of Dolores to the first insurrection against Spain in 1810. This pottery is usually decorated with the name of the town, but is sold broadcast in Mexican markets.

About Guadalajara, to the west, are several pottery towns, the most important being those of Tonalan and Tlaquepaque. The latter name means literally "the place where the jars are made," but of late years the business has diminished in importance, and the most esteemed products are figures made by native artists. Much skill is shown, especially in the making of statuettes of *tipos populares* (popular types), figurines ten to fifteen inches high, delicately modeled in artistic and faithful reproduction, down to the last detail of sandal-thong, of the Mexican as he is. These figures, dressed in cloth and straw and leather, are of pottery, tinted in their actual colors and fired. Though unglazed, they compare favorably with similar statuettes in the conventional European porcelain, —truly works of native art.

Tonalan is probably the most important pottery center in Mexico, the entire village, men, women and children, devoting themselves to the making of enormous quantities of jars, pots, cooking utensils, water bottles, etc. Both glazed and unglazed wares are manufactured, the latter in all sizes, up to two or three feet in height, and fired so as to be slightly porous, to keep the contents cool

by evaporation. The glazed ware is smaller but includes full-sized pots up to a gallon capacity or more, and is light and fireproof. Some very typical and artistic work is done, especially in the making of chocolate pots and similar vessels, which are decorated with conventional designs and well glazed. The colorings are exceptionally attractive, yellows, reds, blues and blacks being softened by a grayish glaze which gives them distinction and beauty.

The potters of Mexico, who without exception are Indian, are true craftsmen, proud of their art and working in silent and happy absorption. The making of products other than pots and bottles is the industry of hundreds of villages, and every festival in every town in the country is the occasion for the visit of the makers of pottery toys and trinkets, the elaborate statuettes from the Guadalajara section, the pottery figures dressed in delicately made hats, suits and dresses, of cloth, straw, leather and paper, being most entrancing. Each festival has its types of pottery figures. Virgins, Infant Christs and the whole furniture of the Bethlehem manger are purchasable at Christmas time for a few centavos, and for the festival of All Souls dancing skeletons of rattling pottery bones are offered in all sizes. In addition, pottery bells of varied shapes are to be had, and innumerable toys, mostly miniature household utensils, are offered even on ordinary market days. Often such articles as pottery bells are the sole product of a village, and the connoisseur can always find new varieties he has never seen before at almost any

fair. The native designs, however, do not often change, although sometimes, as at Tonalan, where truly artistic work is done, the artisans will take up and develop, with native skill, ancient Aztec or coventionalized Indian patterns on order, and are not above adopting them as part of their regular product.

Related to pottery making is the enameling of gourds, an ancient Indian art which flourished long before the Spaniards, probably long before the Aztecs. Its chief center is—or was—the beautiful subtropical town of Uruapam, in the garden state of Michoacan, although certain Oaxaca towns also maintain the industry. Gourds, grown for the purpose, are painted in elaborate and, in olden days, intricate designs, suggestive of the Chinese, and usually on a dark background. The enamel is a particular secret, its base being a plant louse perhaps related to the cochineal, although the paste which is made from it is ochre yellow in color and virtually colorless when used to give the lacquer-like enamel which characterizes the product. The forms range all the way from large vessels as big as pumpkins down to enameled rattles made of half-grown gourds. Like so many of the ancient crafts of Mexico this has largely degenerated in late years to the production of garish articles for the trade of the fairs.

The making of baskets, mats and hats antedates the Spaniards, and being designed primarily to meet native needs has been interfered with but little. The chief fabric for mats and "straw" hats is the fiber

of palm trees, which is woven by hand rapidly and skilfully, but without great emphasis on the artistic, though a little fine hat weaving of the Milan and "Panama" types is done in some of the villages on the Gulf Coast. The fiber, extracted from various species of palm, is kept moist, usually in tiny caves dug in the yards of the houses where the workers live.

Soft baskets of conical shape are also made of palm fiber, but willow reeds and grasses are the chief basis of basket making. Certain specifically Mexican varieties are made of maguey fiber, ropes being twisted over and over with a thin, even covering of the coarse, but silklike fabric, and painted in characteristic and colorful designs.

The weaving of the maguey, ixtle and henequen fiber has been a native industry for many centuries. All are products of various species of the agave, or century plant, henequen, with its long fiber, being one of the great commercial products of the world, known in the market as sisal hemp. Henequen and ixtle are extracted by machinery, but maguey fiber (from the leaves of the plant which produces the national drink, pulque) has to be extracted by hand, an Indian working with a sickle-shaped knife to strip the pulp down till from each leaf he has a great skein of glistening white threads. These he weaves by hand into cloth not unlike jute sacking in quality, although in Aztec times and even to-day it is sometimes made into closely woven, often beautiful materials. This he uses for packing, as a sling in which to

carry bundles and even stones and earth; even yet it is sometimes made into clothing. It is also woven into a very good rope, from which bridles are fashioned for the tough-skinned native burros. From the tip of the maguey leaf the Indian can extract a great two-inch thorn, with a twist of fiber three feet long attached—a needle-and-thread which doubtless served the ancient Aztecs, as it serves their descendants, for rough sewing.

In Yucatan, where henequen is the great crop, the natives make a variety of native hammocks, and twenty years ago their hand-woven products were sold all over the world. To-day machinery has displaced them, but Yucatan still manufactures the finest hammocks in the world, often of hard cotton or linen cord as well as of the rough henequen fiber. The Yucatan hammock is theoretically wide enough for one to sleep full-length, crosswise, and it is indeed the safest, coolest and most comfortable bed for the tropics.

Another industry which the Spaniards did not intentionally discourage was that of weaving. The Aztecs had long woven beautiful garments and textiles from cotton, which they raised on cultivated plantations. The fabric was of fine texture and especially beautiful so that it became the dress for the members of the richer classes and not until the years had brought cheaper methods of manufacture did the native change from his rough raiment of maguey fiber or leather to the softer and more comfortable cotton characteristic of his dress to-day. Cotton weaving by hand, however, was one of the

industries which was almost ruined by the cheaper methods of production in Europe and the better materials which were furnished, and also by the extinction of the Aztec upper classes, who were the chief patrons of the fine native cotton weavers.

The native *rebozo* makers were in the beginning itinerant tradesmen carrying a spinning wheel and hand loom and weaving to order these colorful and delicate lengths of cotton in designs still extant. *Rebozos* were important products of the cotton-weaving industry of Mexico for most of the centuries of the Spanish régime. After the Independence the opening of the country to foreign imports again discouraged the native manufactures, and although from time to time efforts have been made to revive it, the native cotton industry as an art no longer exists. Modern factories now produce *rebozos* in the classical designs, colors and weaves, and these fully satisfy the popular taste.

The Mexican soon learned to work with wool after its introduction in 1541, and the *zarapes* or *serapes*, blankets of typical design and coloring, are a distinctly native art which is still preserved. Comparatively little handwork is now done, however, and the wonderfully fine *zarapes* of Zacatecas and Saltillo are now but a memory and a relic of the collector. These beautifully designed, colored and woven blankets were perfectly impermeable to water and lasted for generations, while the coarse Mexican machine-woven blankets of to-day, of unselected wool, deserve very little recognition except as a part of the typical costume of the native.

The woolen industry, which reached its prime during the colonial period, was a grafted art introduced by the Spaniards, although it is probable that the brilliant colorings used in the woolen *zarapes* of that era were the direct inheritance from and the only survival of the wonderful cotton *timatli* of Aztec princes. The fine quality of the earlier products and the later deterioration may be in part due to the fact that merino sheep were introduced into Mexico in 1541, and animals bearing coarser wool did not appear until later.

The use of silk in Mexico goes back to pre-Spanish times, Cortez having spoken of the silk which was sold in the markets of Mexico. In some of the museums there are pictures woven entirely in silk, said to be the work of ancient Indians, but apparently the fiber was not used to any great extent previous to Spanish times. The raising of silk and its manufacture in Mexico was prohibited by the Spaniards during the colonial régime because silk was one of the perquisites of the Crown. The only native product of silk that is of interest is the beautiful silk *rebozos*, now made of thread silk, by hand, in the classic designs, relatively expensive, and used by Mexican ladies as a light wrap.

One of the ancient arts of Mexico which was preserved by the Spaniards in the convents and has come down to this day is the making of drawn work, an elaboration of hemstitching to most intricate and beautiful designs. The delicate cotton of the Aztecs was worked in this form before the Spaniards came, and although the delicacy

which was attained later was not common in the Aztec period, the Aztecs must probably be given the credit for this art. Its preservation, however, is largely due to convent training, for it was within their walls that the finest specimens of drawn linen were made. The quality of this material and its unique perfection in Mexico make it one of her best-known artistic products, but even before the recent revolution, the art was on the decline, owing to the low prices which were paid and the opening of new and more lucrative employments to women. Like the laces of Europe, the production now depends almost entirely upon the industry of nurses and nuns, with the added difficulty that drawn work is not so conveniently handled, and thus is not often a by-product of other duties as laces may be.

Embroidery was, until recently, a noteworthy art in Mexico, although, like drawn work, economic and revolutionary conditions have now almost destroyed it. Mexican women of all classes worked in silks especially and in tinsels, and the church services were very masterpieces of heavy and beautiful embroidery, while not the least of its output went to the decoration of men's native *charro* costume, both suits and hats. At the height of the vogue of this home art, Mexican women wore the most elaborately embroidered gowns, even gold and silver being affected.

The working of leather has been one of the true native arts of Mexico since long before the Spaniards brought in the craft of book binding. Although to-day mechanical means are used in the

manufacture of the Mexican "carved leather" purses, belts and trinkets, much native skill but very little originality has long been turned in this direction. Saddlery, of course, came after the Spanish introduction of horses, but previously leather was one of the materials from which clothing was manufactured, and the work of the modern Mexican leather carver has a racial heritage, at least, from Aztec artisans. Mexican saddles are particularly esteemed for their elaborateness, but retain little of the artistry which doubtless once distinguished them.

Not a little of the present industry of silver working owes its preservation, however, to Mexican leather work, for it is in the silver mountings of saddles and the furnishing of silver clasps and buttons, often of beautiful design, for *charro* costumes, that the truly native art finds expression. This is the last glimmering of an ancient industry, for even though we have no notable examples of Aztec gold and silver work, we must believe that it had not a little merit, although probably far from the astonishing order which the conquerors described.

The feather work of Mexico to-day has no relationship, except geographic, to the wonderful and elaborate art of the Aztecs. Some of the ornaments and cloaks of the Aztec rulers, made from feathers of humming birds and the birds of paradise, probably surpassed anything of this sort that was ever done in the South Seas or in China. Some of the feather mantles and ornaments preserved in museums indicate even with their great age an art far

beyond anything which exists in Mexico to-day. Modern Mexican feather work is made merely by fastening bits of colored (usually dyed) feathers on cards by means of wax or glue, the designs being almost invariably representations of birds. The Aztec work, on the other hand, was woven into fabrics, glorious in color, perfect and unique in design and workmanship.

The Mexican appreciation of music is one of the artistic traits which comes in for generous notice at the hands of almost every traveler. The silent, apparently rapt attention with which the lowliest peon will listen to the village band is remarked upon invariably, without apparently taking into consideration the fact that the savage and the child alike are always charmed by rhythm and easy harmony. Most of the music discoursed in Mexico is primarily rhythmical, is played with color and spirit, but it is no more noteworthy as art than the most average music appreciated by any other people.

The Mexican band, even in small towns (and every town has a band, usually belonging to the army or the police department), plays well, because it plays rhythmically, and because its repertory is not extensive and no attempts are made to get too deep into the classics. There are, of course, a few fine bands in the country, and in certain centers a true appreciation of the finest music. There have been a few Mexican composers, so that performance and appreciation are not the only forms of music in the country. Their number, in proportion to the

supposedly "musical" population, is relatively small, and their compositions are usually of the most popular type. Only a few, such as "La Paloma", "La Golondrina" and "Sobre las Olas" have had vogue abroad.

We have almost no way of knowing the nature of the Aztec music. What has come down to us is piecemeal, and was long ago transposed to modern scale. The Indians, however, seem to bring in, always, the minor note, especially in their improvisation, but this can well be explained by the heritage of Spanish custom, for Catalan music affects the minor key and much so-called Mexican musical taste is traceable to Spanish emigrants from this province. There are almost no Aztec musical instruments in museums to-day. Only a few of the great drums which belonged to the temples are preserved, but we know that drums, wooden and pottery pipes were used. As in so much else, the Spanish has completely displaced the Indian music which it found.

One of the delightful features of the Mexican love of music, however, is the soft chanting to be heard in the half-melancholy, half-wistful songs which often filter through the dawn in towns and on the haciendas as the laborers go about their early chores. In some of the primitive sections of the country, improvisation is quite an art. There is a certain standard in the ability to improvise a stanza, in both the singer's invention and the quality of his voice—high, strained tenor, with an elaborate falsetto, being the common tone. Itinerant

native players, usually harpists or flutists, often improvise and can make a night interesting or hideous, as the listener's mood is, by their descriptive chants as they lead half-drunken parties home from a *baile* (ball).

Stringed instruments are common and at native dances form often the whole orchestra. It may be added, also, that a far larger proportion of Mexicans, men and women, can play some instrument than is common among other peoples, but, as Mme. Calderon de la Barca wrote many years ago, "When I say that they play, I do not mean that they play well."

Far from the least of the musical features of Mexican life is the dance. A ball is the common form of entertainment, with high and low, and a company of otherwise perfectly sane Mexicans will gather in a stuffy hall and with the greatest apparent enjoyment dance upon each other's toes and upon the toes of the older people who wait as chaperones from 10 P.M. to 4 A.M. for nine nights in succession at the time of the *posadas* or pre-Christmas festivals. The Indians and the peons celebrate everything with a dance, and sandaled men and barefoot women will hop about to an off-key stringed orchestra on a dancing floor of gravel (which is the proper floor when you dance barefoot) with solemn delight in the hours before midnight and thereafter with noisy hilarity, when the liquor has been flowing freely, until dawn.

Dancing is one of the few forms of native folklore which have come down to to-day. Religious festi-

vals, national holidays and tribal feasts are celebrated in Indian villages with dances, in pantomime depicting the lives of animals, or the ancient battles between the Spaniards (with papier-mâché horses about their waists) and the Aztecs, or other battles between the "Jews" (with masks having great hooked noses) and "Christians" (in flowing white robes), or sometimes in unintelligible rites with crudely costumed characters. All is to the accompaniment of a drum and flute, the drum often the toy device made for children, the flute as often as not of tin or pottery.

Mexican folklore is otherwise surprisingly shallow, both in legends and in imaginative characters. Fairies are all but unknown, the only correspondence to them that has been noted being brownies or mischievous male spirits which appear to delight only in pranks and may indeed be a European importation.

The peons, however, believe in love philters, ghosts, the evil eye, magical remedies for disease, witches, magicians and giants. The ghost is almost the chief business of Mexican folklore and the legends of the City of Mexico, of Spanish origin, have to do almost entirely with foul murders, as in our own ghost lore. The Indians, however, pay surprisingly little attention to the bloody side of these manifestations, and their ghosts seem to be concerned with their money and other treasure. Thomas A. Janvier, who wrote so much and so charmingly of Mexico, made a serious study of Mexican folklore, but found himself balked at

almost every turn at the lack of interest in the upper classes in his search.

> Mexicans of the lower class [he wrote] know that their superiors among their own people laugh at superstitious beliefs and therefore could not understand why anyone not of their own class,—even though a foreigner and therefore a person whose habits are expected to be at once extraordinary and irrational—can regard these things seriously.

The Mexican superstitions, however, are very likely to be so tied up with churchly lore that, save as an index of religious preoccupation, they are of little significance.

There remains to be said something of the European culture which, implanted by the Spaniards, has been so vital a psychological factor in Mexico down to to-day. The greatest contribution was certainly architecture, and indeed beyond that there is an astonishing dearth of anything that can be said to have become truly identified with Mexico. During the early days of the viceroys, some of the Indians (the most notable of them Ixtilxochitl), writing in their own language with Spanish letters, set down the legends of their tribes, but after this first burst, almost none but creoles and Spaniards took any part in Mexican intellectual life for three hundred years. The great Spanish dramatist, Alarcon, was born in Mexico, but Mexico hardly claims him, for he early went to Spain. In addition there were not a few noteworthy, if not notable, artists and writers. One of the most interesting of the latter was the Mexican nun (of Spanish descent), Sor Juana Inez de la

Cruz, called in Mexico "the tenth muse", a poetess, philosopher, mathematician and musician, who lived in the late seventeenth century. Baron von Humboldt, visiting Mexico in 1793, spoke of her, as he did of one or two other writers, but he also mentioned two artists. One was Tolsa, who cast the great "bronze horse", a statue of Charles IV, in Mexico City, and "renovated" the churches to their present bare Romanesque interiors. The other was Miguel Cabrera, an Indian (1695–1768).

Cabrera, of the tribe of Zapotecs which produced Juarez, painted pictures compared by enthusiasts with Murillo, and suggestive, as Philip Terry remarks, of some of the fine Luca Giordano frescoes in the Escorial. He apparently never studied in Europe and has a distinct style of his own, which he imparted to both his many copies and to the hundreds of his original works which adorn Mexican churches. Another Mexican painter of the sixteenth century is Jose Maria Ibarra (1688–1756), who was a careful copyist of Murillo, then most popular in Mexico, and also an originator of many finely finished works. Francisco Eduardo de Tresguerras (1765–1833) was a creole, an artist of many accomplishments, his paintings, like those of so many other Mexicans, being so deeply influenced by the popularity of Murillo as to be almost copies of his style. In the years since the first revolution, few Mexican artists have been developed, although a number of promising students were sent abroad by General Diaz, and such young men as Ribera y Martinez (a mestizo), Angel Zarraga (a

creole) may yet make true contributions to Mexican art.

In literature there is more to be said. Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz has been mentioned. Jose Joaquin Fernandez de Lizardi (1771–1827) signed himself "The Mexican Thinker" and was the author of the first Mexican classic, "Periquillo Sarniento," referred to as the "Mexican Gil Blas", his book having brought him prompt disfavor in the viceregal court and six months' imprisonment. Many minor but vivid writers appeared in the early years of the Independence, pamphleteers, and indeed several historians and poets. The important "Historia de Méjico", of Lucas Alaman, was published in 1852. During this period many poets appeared, but most of the literary energy of the time was devoted to political periodicals and pamphlets. Manuel Carpio was an able poet of this period, however, and in 1870 Manuel Acuña, a poet still loved and admired, wrote his "Pasionarias", and a few years later Guillermo Prieto (1818–1897) published the first of his many popular lyrics. From the last of the revolutionary days and through that of Diaz, Mexican literature is really rich, despite the fact that Americans and Englishmen hardly know even the names of such masters as Manuel Orozco y Berra, editor of "México a Traves de los Siglos", and author of the authoritative "Historia Antigua y de la Conquista de México"; Ignacio M. Altamarino and such poets as Jose Peon y Contreras, Juan de Dios Peza, Vicente Riva Palacio, Juan Diaz Covarrubias, Justo Sierra, Antonio

Plaza, and many others, by no means either minor poets or mere stylists. Amado Nervo and Jesus Urueta, both of whom died recently in South America, were masters recognized throughout the Spanish-speaking world. From men still living there have been many notable contributions, both to prose and poetry, for in the latter the Mexican seems especially skilled. But as in the revolution of the early nineteenth century, the revolution of the early twentieth century has turned the writers of Mexico into hurlers of philippics or noisy partisans, till even the best of art is lost in the bitterness of controversy. Mention must be made, however, of two (although they are of the older school), Federico Gamboa, a great poet and essayist, and Emilio Rabasa, a popular novelist and a powerful publicist.

There is usually, however, a true idealistic note in Mexican literature that makes one feel for the same note in her other cultures. But there the masters are not so sure; the hand lacks something of the cunning of the voice (written or spoken)—strange enough in a people who have so great reproductive skill among their artisans. To be sure, as critics have said, there is much of the verbal fluorescence, too much of adorning for adornment's sake, perhaps, but aside from all the mass that deserves such criticism, there are true artists in words, masters who express a genuine idealism, in true as well as ringing phrases.

During the Diaz epoch, and to a lesser extent under the presidents who have followed him, many

young Mexicans, men and women, have been sent abroad on government pensions, chiefly to the United States and to Europe, to study, this one painting, that one sculpture, others music and architecture. They have been a true leaven in the Mexican cultural mass and have served, on their return, as teachers in art schools and as the creators, in ideal at least, of a native art. How deep the leaven will go we have not had time or opportunity to realize. As with American and British students who go abroad, there is always the question as to whether their foreign masters, teaching, one a French, one an Italian method, may not also inculcate French and Italian ideals of beauty, when Mexico needs, and needs so badly, Mexican ideals and Mexican beauty. For Mexico has yet to produce a landscapist who has put her wonders on canvas, or a musician who has sung the song of her heart.

In fact, one of the confusing phases of Mexican esthetics has come from the adoption of French standards in literature and in art. Education in French schools was for a long time the proper thing for the children of high-class families, and Mexico sought consciously during the Diaz régime to become a miniature Paris in America. Even Spanish customs suffer a certain disrepute in the Mexican mind when compared with French cultural standards, a lingering memory, perhaps, of the years of bitter revolution.

The Mexican standard of culture is largely ornamental, and the French school which is most

favored is not the modern French, which is so soundly based upon the philosophy of our own day. The Mexican emphasizes classical learning, the dead languages, ancient philosophy, etc., and his music and art are likely to be superficial and based upon neither an understanding of the laws of harmony nor upon a deep study of the principles of graphic art.

In the use of books the Mexicans are distinctly behind other peoples (as their educational conditions predicate), and although there are some fine libraries these are mostly confined to ecclesiastical works and histories, more or less ancient. The beautiful libraries in Mexico City and the other State capitals are open to students and are used extensively, but there are no popular circulating libraries and the providing of cheap literature for the people is a problem that has not yet been even approached. The newspapers have some departments which, like those of the French, have signed columns of comment on current events and upon the gossip of the day, giving something of a broadening outlook and forming perhaps the most interesting recent contributions to Mexican literature.

Here, where we step definitely toward the problem of the diffusion of culture, we are brought to the realization that in the higher planes of art and literature, even of really good music, we are in a region far removed from the mass of the Mexican people, who have neither eyes nor ears to enjoy fully, nor minds to create. Truly, Mexican culture has grown, like an orchid, far from the soil of its

people. It seems to clarify our understanding to realize this and to think that most of the intellectual advancement which is recorded there to-day is as exotic as the shelf of English novels which the Saxon pioneer carries with him to the jungle. Yet when the white man bent down to plant his seeds deep in the warm soil of Mexico, they grew, and the flowering was wondrous beautiful, bequeathing to Mexico and to all who visit there the glory of towering masses of stone and tile and captured sunlight. The hope of Mexico is in such cultural fusion, and because it has been done, it can and will be done again, and well indeed may we believe in and dream of that day.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEXICAN MIND

THE mind of a Mexican marches through its pantomime of solemn thought, of thrilling emotion, of drifting volition before the curtain of its accumulated traditions. Its temperament, its customs, its play and its culture give the color to the drama of its life, but it is the processes of thought and feeling and will which are the dynamics of that life. And the greatest of these is thought, the intellectual process, the way and the direction of his thinking.

In looking at Mexican psychology one finds it easy to understand why the popular philosophical creed of Mexico has ever been that of Compte, the belief that the intellect is the dominating factor in life. Whatever the truth or falsity of the Compte philosophy when applied to the Anglo-Saxon, or even to the European Latin, any conscious study of the Mexican brings one into full accord with its most sweeping tenets.

The Mexican intellect does seem indeed the dominating factor in all Mexican mental processes. Emotional the Mexican mind may appear, weak-willed in its individual and group reactions, yet always there is a calculated weighing of what is

worth while. The decision may be short-sighted, but it is logical in its development from whatever premise it may take, and often inexorable in clinging to its choice. Mexican emotion is largely an intellectual product, the very manifestations of sex being calculated and self-hypnotic, the wild orgies of revolution the result of a determined if ignorant choice of the easiest way to satisfactions. Will is the slave of traditions and of the decisions of the moment, for the faith in traditions goes deep into the thought of centuries, and a choice once made, uncontrolled and ill-considered though it may be, is unswervingly followed (unless displaced by a later choice) though the end be personal death or national annihilation. The "inconsistencies" of the Mexican character are rather the result of a consistency so colossal as to be incomprehensible to minds more deeply scarred by the wheel of experience. The Mexican seems to have a child's or a savage's unwavering grasp of the details of desire and of the things he hopes for,—a heritage from the Indian which centuries of white rule and oceans of white blood have never eradicated. Circumstance, which in other races will bring that quick adaptation which marks a people's right to survival, meets in the Mexican a dull or a fervid yet unthinking opposition.

Circumstance falls before the onrush of national tradition or else circumstance crushes and ruins an entire era with the force of that inertia which less consistent peoples would have turned to the work of their national advancement. Of such scenes as

this clash of the Mexican mind with circumstances has been made Mexican history. The golden era of Mexico turned upon Diaz's adaptation of the circumstance of threatened American intervention to the pacification of all the rebel chieftains of the country. The chaos of Carranza turned upon the refusal of that wily but unimaginative Mexican to adapt his course to the circumstances which were working upon him.

So throughout all Mexican life the intellectual weighing of a few fixed premises results ever in definite decisions whose development with inexorable logic sets a course which can be changed only by the impact of some idea or intellectual force from without; never does that gift which we call imagination invent a new course or adapt a circumstance into a power for advancement. Each problem must have in it, for the Mexican, the elements of its solution, or the solution never comes. He who deals successfully with the Mexican mind offers problems in their simplicity, with the necessary decision buried within them, and, above all, without extraneous suggestions which give the basis for intellectual quibbling far outside the course it is desired for the Mexican to follow.

No serious student since Baron Humboldt's time has disputed his conclusion as to the total lack of imagination which is so deep-rooted a characteristic of the Mexican mind. Even Mexicans of the highest type, virtually pure-blooded Spaniards in their ancestry, evince a lack of this creative spark as astonishing as it is depressing. So general is this

that great foreign corporations working in Mexico have as their fixed policy the use of Mexican engineers and officials only in the executive and detailed sections of their business. The entire creative process, the making of plans and the determination of policy is left in the hands of foreigners alone. Foreigners have dreamed the dreams that have built modern Mexico, and after those dreams to the minutest detail have been committed to paper, then and then only do they call upon the capable and able Mexicans whom the outsider (and the Mexican) would expect them to use from the beginning.

Porfirio Diaz probably had more imagination than any other Mexican who ever lived, and for this trait alone, if for no other, he would have been worthy of the place which he held and holds in Mexican and in world history. His fault and his ultimate fall came from his inability to find more than half a dozen Mexicans among those whom he could trust who had a true spark of that imagination which makes men and nations great. Those men grew old and they died, and as Diaz himself grew old, he could not seek out those few who could have succeeded his old advisers. The duty of the dreaming, of the planning, of the directing fell ever upon shoulders weakening with age, till they, too, failed to carry it.

That Mexicans of imagination and vision did live then outside the circles of government goes without saying. That they live to-day is equally true, but the rôles that they should have played, and that they or men like them must play before Mexico

is redeemed from within herself, are taken by the motley crowd of revolutionaries and unimaginative sycophants who follow the rote of endless imitation and crude insistence upon the concrete and personal process which has made their land a mockery and its institutions a byword.

It is perhaps this one lack of imagination which sets the Mexican Indian and the typical Mexican mixed-blood alike apart from the great rule of psychology that the minds of men differ not in their processes but in their valuation of things. This alone would make logical the statement set down at the beginning of this book,—that the Mexican mind travels in cycles and on planes different from ours. It indeed sets that mind apart and accounts, in a measure which the world may grasp with difficulty, for the astonishing inability of most foreigners and particularly of most foreign governments to understand and to manage intelligently the Mexicans with whom they have contact. If the real difference between the days of Diaz and those of his predecessors and successors can be put into psychological terms, it will be by keying it to this same note of imagination. Diaz himself could be fired by the innate truth of a great idea and a far-reaching plan; those executives who preceded him and who have followed him work themselves up to an emotional excitement which passes for imaginative appreciation, but they have actually no grasp of the essence of such appreciation. One man may not indeed make an age, but the imitation by his people of his mind and vision

can—and in the case of Diaz did—give impetus to vast advancement.

Imitation is, over vast areas of human thought, the sole practicable means of achievement. Just as the imitation of the deeds and the ideas of great men is the inspiration of all of lesser power, so to such a people as the Mexicans the works and thoughts of their leaders exercise an influence often out of all proportion to the abilities and contribution of those leaders. When the leader is such a man as Diaz, the imitation is relatively a virtue, but the difficulty with imitation is that in its purity it is quite unreasoning, and is just as likely —if not more likely—to take the bad traits as it is to choose the good.

The savage mind, and to a large extent any uncultured mind such as that of the average Mexican, thinks in undirected musing, reasoning only by the association of one concrete thing with its habitual or usual successor, never analyzing into their component parts the events or the thoughts that come to him. Therefore he does not store up in his mind a collection of the qualities or essences of the experiences he has had or of the thoughts that occur to him. He has nothing in his mind to add to any new idea which is presented. He cannot give it impetus by any addition from within his own mind, and his thought processes must function with nothing more inspiring than the elements which each situation brings with it. There is no summation of stimuli, no reassembling of recollections that the various elements of an idea are good

or bad. Minds of this sort are the imitative type, with no series of pigeonholes from which to take out the elements of imagination.[1]

Such minds as that of the average Mexican are imitative because in order to think and so to act, they require such a colossal sum of immediate stimuli that only by the terrific impact of example can they move to intelligent action. The imaginative mind gathers, by observation and analysis, a succession, continuous or interrupted, of the suggestions or stimuli bearing upon a certain action and the means of performing it, and through the retention of those stimuli in mind ultimately performs the act,—and we call it the result of pure reasoning or imagination. The uncultivated mind cannot retain those stimuli; it has nothing to associate them together. Therefore only by the process of example, hurling the entire force of the accumulated intelligence of generations into the mind together, can the act be brought to fruition. The typical Mexican mind is of this class, imitative and never creative, associating concrete acts without dissociating the essences of those acts that might be gathering for the ultimate solution of some future similar problem. The imitative faculty of the Mexican is thus not even cumulative; it does not save up what it has learned for a similar problem, but must be taught anew for each situation and each process. All this has been learned through many

[1] In general, the classifications of the great psychologist, William James, are followed here. *Cf.* William James, "Principles of Psychology," New York, 1913.

failures and after many blasted hopes by the foreign corporations, which have finally discovered how to train their Mexican and Indian employés. So long as each process was itself explainable and unrelated, success followed them, but no Mexican of the lower classes could ever associate his knowledge with the exigencies of any new situation.

The stupidity of people in the life of Europe and the United States is largely their stupidity in the selection of the important detail of anything that is to be understood; the stupidity of the Mexican, and especially of the Indian, is entirely in his utter inability to select any detail at all. The Mexican is stumped by the whole situation because he cannot analyze it; the European is stumped because he made a wrong selection of the important or motivating detail. An American newspaper correspondent has told, with picturesque color, the story of a Mexican bootblack who was quite unable to polish the American's shoes because they were a shade of brown which none of his pots of paste would match, —he could not extract the essence of an approximate color as it would have been extracted by an American bootblack. The solution was achieved by the higher intellect of the American patron, who suggested, in pantomime, that the bootblack use all his different colored pastes in succession. As he described the result, the appearance of a creative imagination upon the horizon of the Mexican's intellect brought relief and joy—and a meticulous imitation of the idea which the American had extracted for him.[1]

[1] Rowland Thomas, in the Sunday *World*, New York, July, 1920.

For the Mexican is an empirical thinker. He works his problems out by "rule of thumb", trial and error and trial again being his chief process of reasoning. He will follow tradition first, and if tradition furnishes no solution or any related conditions from which he may, by experiment, achieve the result which a reasoning mind would reach by deduction, he is completely nonplussed and utterly unable to work out of his dilemma. This is attested in cruel concreteness by the condition of the rolling stock of the Mexican railways as this is written, when hundreds of locomotives rust in the yards because the problems of their repair are utterly beyond the mental faculty of the relatively efficient Mexican mechanics who alone have charge of the railway shops since the exile of their foreign foremen in 1914.

A concomitant of this empirical process of thought is the well-known fact that the Mexican mind can and does conceive brilliant and beautiful "plans" and "proposals" for all sorts of projects, practical and idealistic, but is utterly lost when it comes to working those same plans out in detail and putting them into execution. The average foreigner, recognizing the sincerity back of the thoroughly workable ideas propounded by Mexican governments and Mexican executives, naturally expects to see the plans developed and ultimately realized. It usually takes him years of disappointment and slowly waning surprise to make up his mind finally that the more brilliant and necessary the Mexican's plan, the more unlikely it is to come into realiza-

tion. It usually takes him even longer to realize that the failure of these promised ideals is far more often due to the individual Mexican's psychological inability to face and solve a new problem than to any innate "cussedness" in the Mexican nation.

All this is merged, in its turn, into another phase of Mexican thinking, touched on above,—the undoubted fact that the Mexican mind works from concretes, and that one concrete thought or suggestion brings up in the Mexican mind not the abstract thought which is its shadow, but another, related, concrete thought. An empirical thinker like the Mexican sees only the relationship of the event or thing to other similar events or things; he never cuts up either into its essential elements; he never extracts the detail that he knows from the whole that he does not know, but must find in his memory or experience another whole event or thing which is similar to that which he is regarding. The Mexican explains things in parables, instead of reasoning them out, paralleling the entire situation with another entire situation which he knows and understands. He does this and that because it is the custom, because his ancestors have done it, and not because it has any one essential thing which he recognizes as beneficial.

The abstract type of thinking is far from absent in the Mexican world, however. The most abstruse of philosophers are to be found not only among the Mexican higher and educated classes, with European blood and training, but also among the shrewd Indians of the villages of the interior.

But in virtually all of their reasoning is to be found this one significant quality,—the necessity of a concrete basis from which to work, the acquisition of concrete ideas and conceptions as the elements of every phase of the discussion. In other words, the Mexican philosopher or dialectician of whatever class must invariably work from a concrete premise, and his examples and his development of his theme will be brought only from other concrete bases.

All but the very best Mexican minds seem utterly incapable of bringing to any situation, even to the creation of a work of art, any spirit or force save a concrete suggestion or a concrete inspiration. The most popular books written by Mexicans are based on concrete themes; their novels are those "with a purpose" or, what is equally concrete, obviously created under the inspiration of the works of others. Their pictures are essentially religious themes, landscapes or faithful portraits; their music is reminiscent or frankly onomatopoetic. Of the serious literary works, the chief themes are historical or works based on the admitted suggestion of the themes of others. This does not mean that there have not been real contributions to world literature and art from Mexico, for there have been many such. But in one way or another, all of them tend to support the conclusion that the Mexican mind (due to climate, race or whatever cause there may be) is essentially of the concrete type. From any concrete premise it can travel in elaborate and often thrilling flights of fancy or of logic, but never does it work with any but the elements pre-

sented in the original concrete theme, unless supplemented, not by abstract ideas or clear imagination, but by equally concrete themes or examples brought in from without.

A curious and illuminating example of this phase of the best Mexican minds is presented in the history of the diplomatic relations of the United States with various Mexican governments. The Washington government was, during the intendancy of Carranza as president of Mexico, tripped up, nonplussed and routed, diplomatically, again and again by what was considered the wily diplomacy of that stubborn Mexican executive. The actual method of achieving American discomfiture was through the brazen arguments of the Mexican Foreign Office which again and again, as the American notes arrived, took those austere documents and gleefully turned their firmness to ridicule by the most detailed and philosophical discussion of the most abstruse points of legal and diplomatic procedure. Almost all such discussion was directed, not at the demands of the American government upon the Carranza government, but at the tactful American suggestions that Mexico comply with those demands in certain specified ways. To the Anglo-Saxon those suggested means were the devisings of kindly and scholarly American officials for making compliance easy; to the Mexican mind they were heaven-sent opportunities for endless quibbling and insolent delays, all of which were carefully within the law and diplomatic precedent.

The historic parallels for this method of Car-

ranza's are to be found throughout the entire diplomatic history of the two countries, but in that history one record stands out in illuminating contrast. This was the note sent by Secretary Evarts to Porfirio Diaz in 1878, not long after he ascended to the Mexican presidency. This Evarts note demanded much the same things that other American notes have always demanded, protection to American lives and property and a reasonable state of peace along the Mexican border, but it had this unique quality,—that it did not suggest how the American government expected the Mexican government to comply. It stated definitely that "the Government of the United States . . . is not solicitous, it never has been, about the methods or ways in which this protection shall be accomplished. . . . Protection, in fact . . . is the sole point upon which the United States are tenacious."

Here, be it noted, was no presentation of means; no phase of the subject but the fact itself was left open for discussion. The result, the world knows, was that Diaz called in his chieftains and told them that the note meant American intervention unless Mexico behaved, and largely upon that threat was built the thirty years of his great peace. Not even Diaz could find in the Evarts note a basis for quibbling or discussion, and not even his far from typically Mexican mind could summon up, out of his imagination, any phase of the subject which could be discussed and drawn out into long arguments. The Mexican mind can indeed reason most delicately and subtly,—but only upon and with the

concrete bases which are presented in the subject under scrutiny.

The inability of the Mexican to use his misfortunes for his own advancement is one of the axioms of old residents in the country. The incident described above, when President Diaz turned a virtual threat of intervention into a measure of pacification of the country, ranks, with a few other of his official acts, as almost the only historical adaptation of untoward circumstance to national good. The Mexican has long had a reputation as a "quitter", which is largely due to his inability, psychologically, to pull himself out of a hole by adapting the means of his misfortune to his rescue,—a trait whose presence or absence marks other men for survival or for destruction in their own native struggle.

The Mexican mind, in the change from one political code, from one religious code, from one code of living to another, almost invariably follows a process of substitution and not of adaptation, the complete displacement of one set of principles by another set of principles, and never a turning of one to the service of another. In this, again, he is supported by savage example, for the savage is far more likely to adopt wholesale the practical and mechanical methods of the missionary or the tradesman than to adopt his sentiments and his philosophy,—as the long records of renegade converts and outraged colonies of foreigners in far-off lands abundantly testifies.

One of the phases of Mexican psychology which

the foreigner finds most difficult to understand is this concreteness of the Mexican mind, which conceives of ideas as complete things, to be taken or rejected in their entirety. This goes back to a fundamental trait of Mexican thinking, the confusion of ideas with values, so that, as one Mexican has put it, they "estimate a lawyer as a humanitarian, a surgeon as a biologist, a druggist as a chemist."[1]

This eternal weighing of what is worth while in each situation is to a large extent responsible for another peculiarity, the primacy of the sensation-impulse in the stimulation of the thought processes. Sensation, which in the average healthy animal begets action, and then thought, in the Mexican is much more likely to be the result of thought than a stimulus to thought. In the presence of a possible sensation, the entire force of the Mexican mind is likely to be turned from the sensation itself to cogitation upon the escape from or the realization of the end suggested by the sensation which is felt or pictured as desirable. There are many reasons for this importance of sensation in Mexican psychology, and not the least is the relatively low reaction quality of the usual Mexican nervous system, which thus diverts suggestion from the motor nerves to the more ready brain cells. Data on this latter point has been gathered only in scattered instances, but it seems safe to generalize from such as is available with the assertion that the Mexican Indian

[1] Martin Luis Guzman, "La Querella de México," Madrid, 1915, page 14.

has a low sense of physical pain, and that the Mexican in general and in all classes is not as a rule "quick" to respond to suggestion or to act logically in crisis. In other words, sensation—physical, emotional or mental—starts neither a train of action nor a process of deliberation; it starts, rather, an elaborate and complicated reasoning as to the most desirable and exquisite way of satisfying it if it is pleasant or shutting it off if it is unpleasant.

This almost blind domination of the mental processes by sensation impulses, and the equally significant enjoyment of quibbling more than accomplishment, lead to a conclusion which is a starting point on our road to a true understanding of Mexico.

And this is that as a people, the Mexicans have not yet attained to the plane of higher self-consciousness. Professor James has evaluated that sense of self-realization in his own clear phrases: "our own reality, that sense of our own life which we at every moment possess, is the ultimate of ultimates of our belief."

That glorious self-realization which is the only justified end of all thought and all striving seems indeed far distant from the virtues which the Mexican mind seeks. One can picture the average Mexican, even less than the average peasant of other races, looking in utter wonder at him who suggests such an end of life. And, unfortunately, we can also see, sitting in the seats of power in Mexico, men whose minds cannot conceive even the self-realization for Mexico which was dreamed by the elder patriots, Hidalgo, Morelos, Juarez and

Diaz. Their minds see nothing but the concrete, the personal; their souls dream nothing but an empty glory of hollow, quibbling triumph over some apathetic enemy. Their attention turns not to the realization of their own deep beliefs, that "ultimate of ultimates" which is the justification of thought. It flies to things ugly and minor, unworthy of thought or care,—the nonessentials of mere existence.

The problem of Mexican regeneration on the intellectual plane resolves itself into a redirection of the forces of the mind, and that vital need must be met before Mexico can pass far along the road of progress. The ends to which Mexican mind-power is now directed make it impossible for the things that are really worth the doing, worthy of the praise of men, to rise by their own buoyancy. In the Mexican mind nonessentials do not float away into nothingness in the winnowing process of mere healthy living; they must be picked out one by one and cast away, while the wheat is saved, grain by grain. And such a condition calls for all the concentration of education and civilization of which the world is capable.

CHAPTER VII

THE "EMOTIONAL" MEXICAN

LONG acceptance of easy phrases has established the tradition that the Mexican is ruled entirely by his emotions, that his virtues and his faults alike spring from the instinctive welling up of a passionate nature. It may be that an understanding of the origins as well as the manifestations of Mexican emotion will bring partial relief from the bonds of this tradition, and thus go far toward clarifying the whole uncomfortable problem which this national psychology has presented to us.

The expressions of Mexican emotion are peculiarly the creations of the mental process. Even the emotion itself is determined by the choices of the mind and the conscious or instinctive direction of the mental powers. This is true even in the lower levels of Mexican life where there is apparently little reasoning thought. Emotion is the slave of intellect, the sorry handmaiden of a mind which filters life through twisted sieves and raises itself to emotional heights or plunges itself to emotional depths with sybaritic deliberation. The moral standards of the people apparently depend not a little on sentiment, and while the national "ideals" of land distribution, isolation from foreign influence,

etc., take their power from sentiment and emotion, in their origins they all trace far back to intellectual decisions.

Great grief, easily assuaged by philosophic contemplation; passionate love which devises intellectual stimulants to maintain its fervor and finds its highest emotional expression in the largely mental amusement of jealousy; bravado which arouses itself by the reiteration of the fact that it is *muy hombre* (very much a man); bravery which is wise enough to work itself up into a noble frenzy only when it is sure that the enemy is numerically inferior or is already retiring; anger which never breaks unless for studied effect or under the influence of intoxicants,—these are Mexican emotionalism. The tender sentiments of love of offspring have their roots, if you will, in pride of achievement; politeness is seldom unstudied; honesty is scrupulous only when it is worth while, and generosity overflows only when the attitude of the beneficiary conforms rigidly to traditional standards of *simpatía* and appreciation of Mexican dignity.

An emotional temperament, to be sure, is part of the equipment of every soul born of the mixed bloods of Mexico and nurtured under her tropic sun. But with it comes also a mind which from childhood trains itself in the visualizing faculty which calls up circumstances and ideas capable of creating the physical sensation which is the veritable emotion of that temperament. Perhaps this faculty is imagination, but if it is, it so truly absorbs

all the other manifestations of the quality as to resolve itself into an intellectual concentration that has no other end.

Modern psychologists hold that the sensation itself is the emotion, and that stripped of the physical feeling the emotion disappears. The function of the Mexican mind, then, is merely to create the feeling, the idea of the sensation, and then the emotion follows forthwith. Observation of the Mexican in his emotional states will go far to convince even the believer in the genuineness of Mexican sentiment that this is exactly what he deliberately seeks to accomplish. The outstanding example is, of course, the satisfaction of the sex instinct, to which the typical Mexican devotes approximately three-fourths of his intellectual energy, although the lesser emotional instincts come well under the operation of this tremendous law.

Primarily, the natural basis of our emotions is of course our instincts. And all elementary training to the contrary notwithstanding, man, as a mere animal, normally has more instincts than any of his fellow creatures, for, as Professor James expresses it somewhere, "Instinct shades into reflex action below and into acquired habits or suggested activity above." But there is a relative paucity of higher instincts in the Mexican mind. The three great instincts, Lust, Anger and Fear, are present, but above them there are immense stretches of void and empty emotional life. There is a rudimentary sense of beauty, an appreciation of sonorous music, poetry and oratory and a not

too lovely sense of humor, but we appeal in vain to the average Mexican for the nobler sentiments of true devotion and true sympathy, we seek unsuccessfully in the lower levels of his mind for a true sense of play, even a true curiosity or a true shyness such as makes a comfortable brown bear a charming friend.

Of the great instincts which form the mainspring of Mexican life the chiefest—and at the same time the most profound—emotion is lust, the sex urge. The primary instinct of all animal life (next to self-preservation), in the Mexican it transcends everything else. No appraisal of the Mexican mind is complete without an appreciation of its overwhelming importance, just as no appraisal of Mexican health and achievement is complete without an understanding of the sexual over-indulgence which is the result of this intellectual preoccupation.[1]

The sex instinct, the emotion of lust, has been referred to just above as the outstanding example of the Mexican's devotion of all his intellectual forces, not merely to the gratification of emotional desire, but to the very creation of that desire. A sweeping condemnation is always unfair, but no people, probably, have ever devoted so much intellectual concentration to the ends of sex as the average and typical Mexican. Eroticism in its perverted forms is probably not overly common, but the "normal" sex expressions are the end of life for the average Mexican, particularly the

[1] *Cf.* "The People of Mexico," pages 380 *et seq.*

average Mexican male. His mind dwells ever on sex, and what corresponds to his imagination is devoted—all of it—to sex gratifications. Where the sex desire in its physical expressions is not forthcoming with sufficient frequency to satisfy the intellectual idea of its pleasure, the forces of the mind are directed to the creation of the physical desire itself. A Mexican youth, spending his evening in the tantalizing occupation of talking through the stout bars of her front window to the girl who is to be his wife, on parting from her hies him quickly to the arms of his temporary mistress before the excitement of the hours of cooing love-making with his fiancée shall have worn away,—such bliss of desire must not be wasted.

This phase of Mexican mentality, so studiously avoided in nearly all books on Mexico, yet so tremendous a factor in the national ineptitude of mind and character, is patent to all who live long in the country. It is recognized by the elaborate care with which the girls of the upper classes are protected by convent education and by careful chaperonage, and by the almost universal custom, in the same ranks of society, of sending the boys out of the country for education in schools in the United States and Europe, where more wholesome ideas are the rule and where the influences of servants and of the customs of the land have not the inevitable effect which they have in Mexico.

The care of both boys and girls is frankly as a caution against the too early development of sexual interests, and although we might easily criticize

the customs which prevent the wholesome meeting of boys and girls in ordinary play, which make healthy exercise impossible for "properly" cultured children, and which make courtship a tantalizing and overstimulating emotional debauch, we cannot sidestep the fact that lust is and will probably long continue to be the chief preoccupation of the Mexican intellect. Nor can we fail to see, no matter how widely we look askance, that the keen and active Mexican child sails through his lessons and manifests the most astonishing aptitude for the arts or for duties of citizenship, until, when the age of puberty comes, he suddenly collapses like a punctured balloon. From that moment on he flattens his whole life out into a busy search, first for sexual adventures and soon and forever after for some mental stimulus which will keep him spurred forward in the race for the things of lust.

The byproduct of this concentration on lust is the virtual absence, save in the highest ranks of society, of what the Anglo-Saxon conceives as love. The whole Mexican social organization crushes the woman into the position of a sexual slave, and the companionship which makes love and marriage a sacrament, not only in the Anglo-Saxon lands but in the Latin lands of Europe as well, is as absent from the average Mexican home as it is from the Oriental. Elsewhere[1] this family organization has been discussed with sufficient frankness, so that here it need be only mentioned. It seems to be the

[1] *Cf.* "The People of Mexico," Book II, chapter v.

result, literally, of the concentration on sex and of the overstimulation which keeps the mind from long occupation on any subject that has not lust or the stimulation of lust as its chief end. The love that might well be the revivifying element in torn and bleeding Mexico has thus, through the centuries, been sacrificed on the altars of its baser sisters.

One phase only of true love persists,—the family instinct, an instinct shared with many of the beasts, to be sure, but a mighty and a hopeful factor in Mexico. Maternity brings love in its train, as all the world around, and through life the bond persists, in varying degree and with varying manifestations. In the higher classes, it creates a powerful union, and the family is one of the great hopes of Mexican regeneration. In the lower classes, the family ties are virtually all on the maternal line, for wandering fathers and the lack of any firm system of matrimony give us only the material for a most primeval society with the mother, like the sage old she-wolf, the ruler and head of all.

But of all the manifestations of the kaleidoscopic emotions of love and lust, jealousy is, to the outsider, the most violent. It is the "terrible jealousy" of the Mexican male, the "unreasoning wrath" of the outraged husband which stand out in the usual observations on Mexican love. And jealousy is, when all is said and done, a largely intellectual product. It is created by the vision of the eye and ear, nurtured in the hothouse of cogitation and is

thrust forth with a more or less deliberate purpose,—the effect which its manifestations may have on the object of affection and upon the interloper within the walls.

The manifestations of jealousy bring us immediately to the second of the great emotions, anger, for jealousy bears a close relationship to it. Baffled lust, the origin of jealousy, is closely related to all the causes of anger, impotence, disappointment, etc.

Apologists for the Mexican excesses of the present series of revolutions find ample material in explanations that the atrocities are the result of outbreaks of the "ungovernable temper" of the unhappy mixed breeds and Indians. But granted once more (as always) the emotional temperament and an equal lack of self-control, these outbursts are almost as much the result of deliberate thought as the planned "campaign of frightfulness" in the Great War. The cause is the same, psychologically. The Mexican, lacking as he is in courage (although he is often brave, to draw an important distinction), conceives, consciously or subconsciously, that anger and atrocity will frighten his adversary, and so works up both with that single end in view. The inspiring of fear is the great idea back of virtually all manifestations of Mexican anger. It is the old story of the hideous masks of the ancient Chinese warriors, worn for the purpose of frightening the adversary, the modern story of German atrocity, to cow the civilian population of invaded countries, to stop the onslaughts of the enemy by crucifying their captured fellows.

Anger under sudden provocation there is, of course, but such anger is essentially childlike, coming easily and passing away often without leaving a ripple on the surface of the mind. For even the great "cholers" which are spoken of with bated breath are comparable to nothing in the world so much as a child lying on the floor and kicking in a burst of wild and uncontrolled temper, and they usually pass with no worse result than nervous exhaustion.

In fear, there is less of the intellectual than in lust and anger. The effect of the intellectual process on fear is to inhibit it, and Mexican cowardice is thoroughly unreasoning. To begin at the very beginning of fear-expression in that disinterested cruelty which is so definite a trait of Mexican character, we find but little opportunity to account for it on an intellectual basis. Such cruelty belongs in the lower ranges of animal life, a primal instinct connected with the chase, with battle. and so with the deepest fear-instinct.

The cruelty of Mexico, moreover, has sound basis in historic heritage. The human sacrifices of the Aztecs were a shock even to the Spaniards, but the conquerors' contribution to this psychological phase of the mixed race caused very little confusion in the Indian. The Spaniard was not above cruelty, and he did not discourage the Aztec love of bloodshed, although he abolished cannibalism and the religious forms of human sacrifice which were at variance with his Christian teaching. Any Mexican repugnance at bloodshed that there may

be has no source in the human tendency to picture oneself in the suffering which is displayed, however. Professional assassins have always abounded, and the instinct for blood takes form in bullfights, cockfights, and the use of the dagger.

As to cruelty to animals, as such, there is a confusion of the emotional enjoyment of bloodshed with the philosophical idea that one must get the most for the least trouble, The slaughtering of a steer on a Mexican ranch is the subject of great interest to the entire family and one of the brutal traditional practices is to tie up a beef for two or three days without food or water before killing him. Perhaps of similar origin is the fact that the Mexican seldom kills an animal which breaks a leg, but rather leaves it to die in great suffering after many days. If a foreigner suggests killing the beast to save his agony, he is greeted with the assertion that the owner loves that animal and has not the heart to kill him. But if the foreigner insists in his humane intention and shoots the sufferer, he is, as often as not, required to pay for the animal in spite of the fact that it would have died in any case. Instances of cruel beatings of animals are common, and a peon will starve his burro, horse or cow without compunction. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that the average Mexican peon, in handling animals, treats them as well as he treats himself, because he often goes without food or eats what is available. The attitude of the upper-class Mexicans toward their animals is sometimes humane, but seldom sympathetic. The use of curb-bits and the

fierce riding of horses, the unnecessary cruelties to dogs and other pets, can, at its best, be traced only to traditional belief that these are the proper methods for "handling" animals to get "service" and proper homage.

The bullfight may perhaps be accounted for equally well as a race heritage from the days when the hunting of fierce beasts was a vital factor in savage life, as on the ground of disinterested cruelty. Indeed, the entertainment and the exhibition of the skillful art of the *matador* may be given by a Mexican as reason enough for a bullfight, but it does not account for the prevalence of cruelty in the great national sports of cockfighting and bullbaiting as well. We must still admit disinterested cruelty as one of tne most significant branches of the great emocional family of fear.

Above the plane of cruelty, however, fear takes on other significant secondary forms. If the evolution of man from the brute and from the savage is marked, as it is marked, by a steadily lessening frequency of the occasions for unreasoning fear, then in the Mexican the advance has reached a stage where fear is still powerful but has taken on special forms of expression.

Perhaps the lowest of these is that suspicion which is so dominating a mental trait in the Indians of Mexico and so direct a result of the isolation in which the people live. In the interior villages and Indian settlements, as has been noted, the stranger is always regarded as a potential enemy, and the fear and suspicion are also developed, by such men-

tal processes as are used, into an elaborate system of feuds with neighboring villages,—traits, both of them, of the unthinking savage the world around. In the slightly higher grades of Mexican life, fear takes yet another form in the cunning which shapes so much of the life of the lower middle classes, the eternal effort to find an advantage which will overcome a real or supposed superiority in their fellows or in the foreigner.

Fear is almost the only motive recognized in the Mexican mind for the impulses of kindliness, sympathy and consideration which are offered to Mexican individuals or groups by the simple foreigner. Kindness, even politeness, in a foreigner is accepted by the mass of Mexicans as a sign of weakness, a manifestation of fear. The astonishing responses which are made, in diplomacy as in private life, to generous advances, have their origin in this one conviction,—that courtesy and consideration come only from fear of the object thereof.

A thoroughly typical example of this attitude is found in the story of an American who, hearing that a Mexican woman servant whom he had once employed was anxious to possess a gold wrist watch, sent one to her from New York. His acknowledgment was from the woman's new employer, who reported that she had accepted the gift, but had announced that it had been sent her because her former employer feared her, because she knew so much of his affairs!

The story will strike an answering chord in the experience of all who have had contact with

Mexicans. In many cases the condition is amusing, as here; in others, it is the source of personal tragedy, business difficulties, or, what is more far-reaching, serious diplomatic complications. It is doubtful if Americans will live down, in less time than a generation, the effect on the Mexican mind of the conciliatory tactics pursued by President Wilson toward the Carranza government. No Mexican official then or now believes that there was any other motive for Mr. Wilson's patience than a fear of the harm Carranza could do the United States, either by invasion (actually!) or by openly espousing the German cause in the war. And no Anglo-Saxon needs to be a partisan to know that whatever the blunders of the Wilson policy toward Mexico may have been, they were dictated by an over-anxiety to "give Carranza a chance." It is the tragedy of that policy that it failed so utterly to grasp the merest fundamentals of Mexican psychology.

Of the remaining human instincts, perhaps the conditions surrounding curiosity in the Mexican are the most significant and illuminating. For curiosity, as such, is not one of the outstanding characteristics of the Indian or of the mixed breed. His eye seldom sparkles with interest and seldom does one find that spirit of wonder which is the beginning of imagination and, indeed, of education and uplift. Apathy, so prominent a characteristic of the whole Mexican people, has its beginnings in this lack of curiosity. Back of apathy are also ill-health (a national ill health), an abuse of stimulants,

and other physical causes, and in addition it has even a social source. The fatalism which has killed curiosity and made apathy a national characteristic in Mexico has been nurtured by the centuries upon centuries when no choice has ever been required of the mass of Mexicans. Aztec emperors, Spanish governors, republican politicians, have asked and wanted none of it, and never, even in the late years of radical socialism in Mexico, has there been any true awakening of the masses to curiosity, to deliberative choice, to an impersonal interest in the world in which they live.

Shyness normally has similar origins with curiosity and is based in the terror of the unknown. In the Mexican this very elimination of choice, the very providing of a dull round of monotonous life which has been his portion through the ages, has eliminated much of the instinct of shyness which is characteristic of savage peoples; only in childhood and under conditions of servility does it really manifest. On the other hand, secretiveness, an instinct which is actually an intellectual phase of primitive shyness, is developed beyond all bounds in the Mexican; he turns, again, to the mental as opposed to the instinctive. His secretiveness is part, indeed, of that true or false consciousness of inferiority which is one of the motivating agents of the Mexican attitude toward the outside world.

Acquisitiveness, traceable to envy and to jealousy, is an instinct which is bound up with the qualities of honesty and dishonesty, but it is unlikely that the true manifestations of it as an instinct

are really to be found in the Mexican nature. It, again, appears chiefly as the result of conscious or subconscious thought directed by or directing the desires of the mind and body.

Honesty is an instinct whose presence or absence in Mexican character has been the text for endless discussions. Superficial observers who have come in contact chiefly with the lower classes are very likely to find that the Mexican is without honor and without any sense of honesty. On the other hand, those tactful persons who have had large business dealings with the highest type of Mexicans discover that they are almost invariably honest and honorable. Such people usually recognize the differing code of honor and realize that petty thefts in justice should not come under discussion of honesty in a land where centuries of feudal organization have drilled into the mind of the people the idea that there were certain perquisites which belong to the common man, even though law may hold them the property of his master. It is very probable that most of the dishonesty in Mexico can be traced, also, to a sense of values, and that honesty is present when it is worth while and absent when it seems unimportant. In large matters the Mexican is usually worthy of a high degree of trust, but in small matters the peon, at least, is a natural pilferer. A special phase of the question of honesty comes up in the fact that a Mexican does not, as a rule, trust his own people as much as he will trust a foreigner who is trained in a more rigid school of ethics. This last point is probably its own explana-

tion and a reflection on Mexican moral training. The code of honor of upper-class Mexicans is high, although easily diverted by the self-delusion to which the race is prone. Old residents find that the trusted servant in Mexico is the honest servant, but they have, of course, learned how to arouse his sense of honor.

Property rights are complicated by the inheritance of the Indian communal idea. The peon's right to steal ore from the mine in which he works, flour from the sacks which he is transporting, are never questioned in the offender's mind, and the idea of humanity's equal ownership of all the fruits of the soil crops up again and again. Another phase is shown in the story of a rancher, who, having borrowed a boiler and kept it two years, sold it because he had had it so long that he considered it his own. A similar case is that of another small farmer who borrowed a wheelbarrow and considered it an act of injustice when he was asked to return it after a year.

The moral instinct of the Mexican is one of the complicated phases of his psychology, for it again is tied up with race, with climate and with food. The influence of the Church in Mexico was exerted, at least in the early days, along mystical lines, and, save for education in theology, the practical problems of ethics were touched only in their relation to the future life and very little in their relation to the present. As a result the early Mexican, with his heritage of Indian mysticism and Spanish theology, built up a fabric of moral customs which are,

to his descendants, more important than any mere moral principles. To a lesser extent this is true throughout Mexican social life, and the traditions of the classes have set their moral standards. These may be explained briefly as a distinction between immorality and unmorality. The Mexican may be said to be unmoral as judged by current European and American standards. Right and wrong, particularly in the relationship of men and women, has little place in his philosophy, and pure ethics is a phase of philosophy which influences few Mexican processes of thought.

If the instinct for morality is somewhat atrophied into an intellectual weighing of what is worth the effort of righteousness, the instinct for play is a hardly more beautiful development. Years ago, when the writer first went to Mexico, his series of articles in a Mexico City newspaper[1] set down his early impressions with a frankness which greater knowledge might have inhibited. Through those impressions, thus recorded, ran a continuous expression of surprise over the brooding melancholy of the people, over the utter absence of that spirit of play which makes a crowd, in New York or London or Paris, especially at festival time, a good-natured, sociable, if aimless mass of natural friends. It simply was not present in the Mexican crowd, and because it was not, a sense of melancholy seemed omnipresent. On one occasion, the article discussed the appearance of the Mexican group at a festival

[1] "Notes of a Newcomer," *The Mexican Herald*, December, 1904, and January, 1905.

time which, under brilliant fireworks and in the balmy winter night of Mexico City, was absorbing the music and the parades devised by the wise old dictator, Diaz, for the amusement of his people. The picture was depressing. The editor of the paper commented that it had its merits of truth, but that as acquaintance broadened, the realization would come that the peons had their "little jokes just like other people." That broader acquaintance has come and with it the realization that there are jokes and a true and subtle humor; that the emotional crowd is played upon by music and by oratory and by poetry; and that it enjoys its festivals and dances. But with that broadening knowledge there has never come a feeling that the sense of play, the spirit which makes life livable and worth all it costs of pain and sorrow,—that this sense of play is an instinct in any Mexican.

It is not impossible that this absence is responsible alike for the great emotional influence of oratory and poetry and for the particular types of humor which are characteristic of the Mexican. The Mexican in action never "has a picture of himself" as the Anglo-Saxon phrases it. He never sees the incongruous side of the figure which he cuts, a trait which is vital to any one who would, for example, compose and recite a ponderous ode on the occasion of the inauguration of a new public laundry in an Indian village. Nor has he the self-consciousness which will prevent his responding with tense and appreciative emotion to the stirrings of such a poem or to the stately phrases of an elaborate

oration. It is hardly for the Saxon to say that his own utter self-consciousness, his own clear picture of himself in every situation is the better part; suffice it that the Mexican is different, and that as a result he hears and thrills to poems, odes and orations with a simplicity and genuineness that go far to justify the authors and the speakers of such efforts.

This instinct for the beautiful, shall we say, runs through the entire gamut of Mexican life. In music, improvisations are the accepted test of skill, and even in the fields with the peons, he who can improvise words and music is not only rewarded with honest appreciation but is a type to be found in almost every group.

Moreover, the instinct for oratory and dialectic is almost universal. Peons will argue with high-sounding phrases and voices ringing with sentiment upon the most trivial situations based upon the weakest of premises. Of late years the formerly forbidden field of politics has opened to give new impetus both to oratory and debate, and where, before, the Mexican could argue of nothing but his individual wrongs, the gossip of his neighbors and the behavior of his sons, even the peon can now make great strophes of his new conceptions of socialism and the rights of man. To this the Mexican now devotes much energy and a vast amount of rhetoric. Almost any Mexican, when he is trained intellectually, is a fiery orator and debater, skilful in repartee and perfectly capable of holding his own in any argument. As a people the Mexicans respond distinctly to the power of eloquence, often

a very charming eloquence. The lower classes are swayed hither and yon by skilful speakers, and any orator is sure of an audience, even though it be the same audience which cheered as loudly for his rival a few moments before.

Mexican humor seems closely related to this same instinct of appreciation, of emotional response. There is little of the heavy chaffing typical of Anglo-Saxon wit, and the two outstanding types of the lighter emotion are ridicule and punning. The latter, the universal form of wit the world around, takes a special form in Mexico, where, for example, the shift of well-known public scandals to personal situations is universal, even down to the classes where one would ordinarily never seek it. It has been said that most humor is based on suffering or discomfort, and this is indeed true in Mexico, where there seems ever to be mingled a touch of cruelty.

The easy response of the Mexican mind to the particular form of humor which is contained in ridicule is so prompt and goes so deep that such a jest immediately turns the most serious matters into jokes, and the recovery from such a joke to the plane of serious consideration is literally impossible. Such a condition is of course not the peculiar property of Mexico, but there the joke need hardly be even good in order to work havoc; the only requirement seems to be that laughter come. A spark of wit in the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico City has been sufficient at times, even though it were but an awkward jest, to ruin the most impor-

tant business. A facetious saying passing from one to another has been known to upset an entire government policy, and a humorous epithet attached to a government official has more than once brought him to absolute downfall.

An instance of the latter was the dubbing of Gustavo Madero, brother of the president, as "*Ojo Parado,*" a comment on his glass eye. This circumstance actually had much to do with bringing him into contempt and ridicule, for the reports of his alleged profiteering in public works (the equivalent for which in Spanish is "*Obras Públicas*") were stamped indelibly upon him by referring to him as "O. P.", the initials of both "*Obras Públicas*" and "*Ojo Parado.*"

A wit in Mexico City named the cabinet selected by Limantour in the closing days of the Diaz régime (March, 1911) "*El Gabinete del Do de Pecho*", the implication being that the cabinet was destined to last about as long as one can hold on to high C, a subtlety which had the prompt and complete triumph of a prophecy.

The occupation of Mexico City by troops under General (later President) Obregon in 1915 witnessed many excesses and much suffering, but some wag wrote an anagram on the name of Alvaro Obregon, forming with the letters the words "*Vengo a robarlo*" ("I come to rob"). Persons living in Mexico City at the time report that this witticism, which circulated throughout the city with the rapidity of a wireless, considerably lessened the tension of bitter feeling engendered by the abuses of the soldiery,

which were taken thereafter, as one would say in Spanish, entirely "*de guasa*" (as a joke).

Another incident is indicative of the type of this grim humor. After the flight of provisional President Carbajal (August 3, 1914), the capital awoke one morning to find written in chalk in large letters on the door of the National Palace: "*Se alquila. Para informes, dirigirse a la Casa Blanca, Washingington, D. C.* ("For rent. Apply to the White House, Washington, D. C.").

There is indeed true humor and a great deal of it in the Mexicans, although it is accented by but little levity, and is more often childlike and wantonly cruel. An instance is the ridicule in which the schoolmaster is held in Mexico. This great public spirit is always pictured and discussed as the comic dominie of the Spanish farce, an attitude most distasteful to the teachers, for it is combined with a humorous patronage which wonders "why the poor fellow doesn't become a street-car conductor so that he may get a living wage."

So common and so unlovely indeed is the humor of the lower classes that in answer to a newspaper's question as to "What is the most pernicious habit of the Mexican people?" one correspondent replied:

> In my opinion, it is the making of jokes, whether they fit the case or not. . . . A law is made, and the next day a facetious saying goes from mouth to mouth; should there be an epidemic, instantly it receives a name which awakens the hilarity of the public. . . . This custom, which is even more general among men and women of the lower classes, perhaps shows that the race is not devoid of wit, but it also means that it

lacks seriousness and courteousness. Perpetual joking is a symptom of incurable frivolity, and there is nothing worse than a frivolous people."

Throughout the humor of the Mexican lower classes runs a note of blasphemy and frivolity which doubtless suggested the protest quoted above. The vilest stories in Mexico are tied to the saints and priests of the Church, and the appreciation of a joke is greatly increased if it is hopelessly blasphemous. Indeed, one who passes along the streets of the City of Mexico has proof enough of this in the names given the dirty *pulque* shops, which sentimentalists attribute to misguided religious feeling, but which the Mexican resident knows were the result of a diabolical humor. "El Retiro de Juan Bautista" (The Retreat of John the Baptist); "El Retiro de la Santa Virgen" (The Retreat of the Holy Virgin); "El Séptimo Cielo" (The Seventh Heaven); "The Devil's Triumph"; "The Trail of the Red Devil"; "The Embrace of St. Helen," to go no further, are proof enough of a satanic humor which may well be discussed solemnly in "letters to the newspapers."

The perpetual joking of the Mexican is emphasized in the upper classes as well as in the lower, and General Diaz himself was not above a grim or clever sally. One such tale is worth repeating here.

It is no secret that the revolutionary movement of November, 1910, was nipped in the bud only by the prompt action of the Diaz forces. Many papers fell into the hands of the government agents at the time, and among them was a carefully

worked-out plan to seize Mexico City from The Hill of the Star, in a near-by suburb. The Minister of War at the time (General Gonzalez Cosio) one day found President Diaz engaged in studying these plans. To flatter his chief, General Gonzalez Cosio said to him:

"Mr. President, those are not plans; they are nothing."

"No, they are not plans," General Diaz replied. "If you order a pair of trousers and they are promised for Saturday and you go on Thursday, you will find only two great pieces of cloth which look more like skirts. But if you go on Saturday you will see that they will fit your legs very well. You are right. These are not plans, because we arrived on Thursday."

In the shadowy field where emotion merges into will lies habit, one of the important psychological elements of all life. Habit is largely emotional in its origin and looks to will for its direction. In the Mexican mind, then, habit holds important place, and perhaps the most illuminating explanation of the chaos of Mexican feeling and the uncertainties of Mexican will is the utter disturbance of racial habit which was forced upon the Mexican Indian types for the three hundred years of Spanish domination. It seems safe to state that in this matter of habit-forming the Mexicans have an important quality which gives real promise of an opening for advancement, a balance against the vast weight of tradition. Professor Wallas holds that the habit-forming trait varies tremendously

with race, quoting Aristotle, who reported the astonishment of the Greeks (who had little of the trait) at the ability of the "Kelts" to become accustomed to and indifferent to danger.[1] He goes on to say that "it is no mere accident that the Great Society has been developed with most success amongst the North European races whose powers of blind habituation excited the contempt of the Greeks."

Thus it may well be that the blind conservatism of the Mexicans, while it is to-day apparently a stumblingblock to progress, has in it the inertia which will make for advancement and great changes in character under proper direction and understanding education. Habit, if unnatural, is easily upset by crisis (as witness the present upheaval of Mexican life and the rush back to the lower phases of Indianism), owing to the failure of education really to appreciate and to work with the human elements of education. But in the new education which must come to Mexico, the work will be along the lines of natural development of the race, through its own habits and emotions and predilections. The vast changes to progress and enlightenment will come surely, because they will be along paths well trod in the race mind of the centuries long before the dream of white domination.

Until now, the life of Mexico has been only one long history of the grafting of foreign customs and foreign habits upon the mind and soul of the country. It takes a far more callous mind than seeks,

[1] Graham Wallas, "The Great Society," New York, 1913, page 72.

in this writing, the solution of Mexico's problems to see only wretched degeneracy in the present Mexican crisis. Rather the troubles of to-day, like the troubles of the white man in many other lands, are the result of his faulty systems of education which have tried to change habits by wrenching them loose, when the very strength of the habits should have been the greatest encouragement for their adaptation to form new habits. Neither the Mexican of old time, the Indian of to-day nor the mixed-blood of to-day is to be punished or anathematized. Nor, more than all, are the Spaniard who has taught him and the Anglo-Saxon who can teach him now to be ruled out for their failure.

The crisis of Mexico is but part of the crisis of our civilization, and we have no right to condemn either the pupil who failed or the teacher who has been unsuccessful. Both must try again and learn anew, for the white man is still the greatest of the world's teachers, and with his new understanding and his new seeking of adjustment instead of destruction, he will carry the mixed-blood and the Indian of Mexico forward surely—and indeed not slowly—to the formation of his new civilization.

Again the reference is to the important work of Manuel Gamio, quoted above, and the repetition of a phrase which tells a truth vaster than the truth about Mexico alone: "We cannot Europeanize the Indian at one stroke; we had rather Indianize ourselves a little to assist in the rapprochement." [1]

[1] Manuel Gamio, "Forjando Patria," Mexico City, 1916, page 40.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS WORTH WHILE

THE fundamental elements of Mexican decision have come down through tradition and racial heritage; they were settled long before the individual who "makes" them was born. Beyond those fixed elements, however, the normal Mexican will is the slave of the intellectual decisions as to what is worth while. Only under the influence of intoxicants, or abnormality, does it forget that beacon of decision which rules in its outer life as well as in the inner world of emotion.

Stubborn against force, docile under persuasion, only an appeal to the mind seems able to move the Mexican to his choices. And the decision once made, there is perhaps no people, certainly no primitive people, more tenacious. Interest indeed may lag, apathy may take control, and an Indian who plants a crop with care may forget it before the harvest, but as a rule, only an appeal to the conscious choice of the mind can divert the will from its inevitable road to accomplishment.

On the other hand, decision is usually astonishingly prompt, and there is seldom any complaint of a Mexican's failure to make up his mind. The

Mexican will is far from feeble, and the difficulty with it is rather in the doggedness with which it clings to its choices, refusing to be pried loose from them. Instances of astonishing—almost superhuman—persistence are common. A trustworthy American archæologist tells of an old Indian woman in a Oaxaca village who, out of spite or disappointment, announced that she was going to die,—and die she did, in three days. A servant in an American household in Mexico City had her tiny savings stolen from her and, in chagrin and grief, took to her bed and died within a week.

Theoretically, the persistence of savage peoples is due to the relatively minor importance of their natural inhibitions; once we get beyond tradition and taboo, the primitive mind is usually easily dominated. But in the Mexican there is a relatively unique factor. There are many powerful inhibitions, and yet they and all else are swept aside, once the Mexican considers that anything is worth the doing, and he has the energy, the time and the application to achieve it. Once those forces of decision have been directed into one channel, it takes more than mere authority to turn them to other directions. One elderly peon on a foreign plantation whose duty, for years, had been the driving of burros loaded with water casks to and from the river, achieved himself an invention, and no orders—there was no good argument against it—could divert him. Instead of doing the obvious thing and unloading the casks, filling them and then reloading the heavy weights, he led his train

of burros, casks and all, into the river and waited patiently in water up to his neck until the stream filled the casks of its own will. As the question of dirt and wet and time did not enter into his decision, he was doing a thoroughly intelligent thing; to him it was worth while.

The direction of attention to any end is, perforce, the result of a decision that the end is worthy, so when the peon decides that it is desirable to accomplish a minor theft, the details of it will occupy his entire intellectual process for days, no matter how small the guerdon or how great the risk; his choice has been made, and to it he brings every force at his limited command.

Employers of Mexican labor are continually telling of the tremendous change which comes over a gang of workmen when they are put on a system of payment by which a definite task is set as a day's work, and the worker either sent home when the task is done, or allowed to begin another; often two "days' work" is done in a single shift of ten to twelve hours. Again, here is something worth while, something the peons can comprehend and from the comprehension direct their wills to accomplishing.

The decisions which make such actions as this possible are achieved against the inertia of the greatest of all Mexican inhibitions, apathy. Native it seems to be, just as tradition and fatalism, the other two great inhibitory elements, undoubtedly are. But there are two direct causes of Mexican apathy. Only one can be blamed on inheritance.

The lack of vigor, due to climate, undernourishment and the abuse of stimulants, has combined with the fatalism induced by long oppression and long freedom from any important choice to shut out almost every spur to achievement. Thus, in the minds of millions of Mexicans to-day there is no connection between the good things of life and the effort which has to be put forward to obtain them. They have actually never been taught that industry is profitable. The centuries of virtual slavery, the ancient customs of giving food and housing as part of the wage and selling everything else on credit at the hacienda or mine store, drove into their simple minds the conviction that the pleasures of life came at the discretion of the employer or of the Spanish clerk at the store.

Here again we go back to the false valuations of the ways of life, even of what is worth while, to the weight of the peon's fatalism, to the slavery that first taught him that he need not actually work to live and that if he worked too hard he gained nothing for his pains. "Patience and shuffle the cards" is the maxim of all Mexicans who find the tide of affairs going against them. There is nothing to do but to go ahead, and nothing is gained by going too fast. "*Quien sabe?*" is an entire philosophy, for this phrase means far more than a mere question of "Who knows?" Rather, it says that nothing matters, for what will be, will be, despite all human endeavor.

Beyond such fatalism, however, there is another

deep cause for the Mexican apathy which to-day still blocks the Mexican will in its higher manifestations. This is the deficiency in education in the responsibilities and opportunities of life, the failure to replace Indian tradition and its stubborn clinging to old standards by a deep national realization of the vital connection between the thing achieved and the effort expended. The desire to "get things done" which spurs the Anglo-Saxon is missing, and the Mexicans, from peon to professional man, conduct their affairs according to their own conception of the maxim of Marcus Aurelius,—that one should live as though one were to die to-morrow, and work as though one were going to live a thousand years.

The educational problem of which apathy is the index is to reach the Mexican's conceptions of what is worth the doing and to inspire him to a higher usefulness thoroughly compatible with such powers of intellect as he is endowed with. This chance has never been given him in all Mexican history. Matias Romero, long Mexican minister to Washington, wrote of the Colonial period: "The Spaniards did not educate the peons or attempt to elevate them; neither did they try to elevate themselves. The whole of Mexico was plunged into apathy, but it was an apathy of supreme indifference, not of despair."

The phases of self-control and indulgence link the question of apathy to the domination of intellect in the choice of will. In the cradle Mexican babies are famously "good", and in battle Mexican soldiers

die with utter calm,—here are factors of "self-control" which are surely manifestations of the "apathy of supreme indifference." But in the adult, and particularly the more or less intelligent adult, the appearance of lack of control is the very antithesis of indulgence, or else only superficial. Anyone who knows Mexicans has seen the flush of anger come into the face and fade away to an almost Oriental repression unless, indeed, the expression of the anger seemed worth while. Only under the influence of intoxicants or narcotics, or after the passions have been deliberately aroused, is the Mexican really uncontrolled. The famous cholers of anger which are spoken of in solemn awe by those who have witnessed the exhibition are as noted above usually indulged in only in the presence of an appreciative audience. The Mexican philosophy does not place a very high valuation on the control of what he calls natural impulses, but if he gives them sway, for instance in a deed of violence, it can be taken for granted that he has convinced himself, by whatever process he may have used, that the thing was worth the doing and worth the risk.

So it is with the less vital inhibitions of modesty, pride, honor, etc., and with the control of those forces of emotion which tend ever to stampede the will just as the inhibitions tend ever to check it. All seem to fall ultimately under the control of the intellectual decisions which make the great choices in all men, but in peculiar fashion dominate the choices of the Mexican.

The science of psychology[1] finds that there are five types of normal decision in the human mind: first the reasonable, in which we shift and rearrange the elements of the situation until we find a satisfying action which squares with the various precepts of our life and with our belief in the needs of the situation; second, a drifting decision, determined by the circumstances surrounding both ourselves and the situation which we consider,—a decision usually made before all the evidence is considered; third, the sudden choice from within, due to intuition, emotion or faith, of "forward though the heavens fall", as James puts it; fourth, the decision that comes from a sudden change of heart, the result of sudden experiences or intuition, which takes on the importance of a change in our character, almost; fifth, the feeling that the evidence is all in, the careful balancing of all the elements and the final decision by a "heave of the will." The first four decisions reject utterly the alternative choice, but the fifth does not forget; it knows the loss that has been suffered in the elimination of the alternative choice.

It is seldom, if ever, that the Mexican mind makes its decisions in the first and fifth ways; the slow process of reasoning almost never occupies the Latin-American mind. Most of his relatively few normal decisions are the result of his drifting choice of ends that square with his ideas of what is worth doing,—the second type of choice. The

[1] *Cf.* William James, "Principles of Psychology," New York, 1913, pages 531 *et seq.*

drift to a decision may, in the Mexican, also be a drift to apathy and indecision and save under emotional or alcoholic stress, the third form of choice, to go forward in spite of everything, never appears upon his horizon. The "change of heart" form of decision is also rare, in the form of an inward change of character, but when shaped by exterior events, it is often the method of deciding the most momentous issues, the result of that sustained pressure from without which is utterly maddening to minds of the Mexican type.

Thus he who would obtain from the Mexican a decision prompt and satisfying appeals above all things to the mental process. Squaring a situation with the known facts of Mexican tradition, with the moral standards, with the selfish wishes, with the prejudices which may take the form of apathy and with those overwhelming values which the Mexican so astonishingly puts upon such abstractions as dignity and his own peculiar code of honor,—the taking of such pains assures a prompt and almost unconscious decision in the Mexican. But may the gods help him who would force the healthy Mexican mind to a decision which fails to square with that tremendous force of tradition which dominates its every act, or (in the upper classes) with those peculiar adaptations of European culture which have been worked into the intellectual heritage of the land.

But the Mexican will is not always the healthy, dependable sort of mental process just described. Too often the values are distorted and the vision

deflected, and more often still action follows the suggestion with a rapidity which is understandable in the unschooled mind but which is nevertheless far from reassuring. Very often there is that form of decision called the "obstructed will", when but the one idea, the traditional idea usually, gets on the track and cannot be diverted by any power under the skies, neither argument, the offer of other inducements nor force itself. Indeed, the dominance of tradition and custom in the Mexican mind often takes on the form of the true obstructed will in other types of mentality.

Amongst the other types of will, what Professor James calls the "explosive will" is found in that type of the Mexican mind which differs from the apathetic norm. Here is the daredevil, the "mercuric temperament", where inhibition is lost or was never heard of. And here is to be found the break in understanding of the minds of Latin and Saxon,—for this type of will comes from the Spanish side and not from the stolid, suspicious Indian. James explains it, "Monkeys these seem to us, whilst we seem to them reptilian." This type of decision then, seems to indicate a differing process of thought, a different mode of reaching a conclusion, but in this Professor James, in one of his illuminating generalities, gives us a clue to the better understanding of the Mexican, for he says:

> It is the absence of scruples, of consequences, of considerations, the extraordinary simplification of each moment's outlook, that gives the explosive will its motor energy and ease;

it need not be the greater intensity of his passions, motives, or thoughts.[1]

The simplification of outlook, the elimination of scruples and consequences,—these clarify and mark the Mexican mind when it achieves that choice which is called the "explosive will."

Will is in its last analysis the link between the mind and the realization of the ideas of the mind, and the basis of our study of the Mexican will is therefore the concrete phases of its manifestations. Is it pleasure, or the thought of discomfort which motivates the Mexican's choices? Is it a strong moral sense, a belief in some tremendous right and wrong, which colors those choices? Or is it that the Mexican mind-process is consciously directed to shutting out the inhibition of high moral purpose, so that sloth and passion may have their way? Those are questions which we must now seek to answer, but this we do know,—that the actuating force, if not the force which originated the impulse, is the effort of attention, the direction of the interest which goes back through all the countless generations of racial development.

We can no more control or reshape the primary qualities of that interest than we can change the color of our skin, and only through long education (which the Mexicans as a people have never had) can it be turned ever so slightly from its momentous course. It is upon the strength of the idea thus directed, upon the momentum which it brings to the mind, that virtually every human decision rests.

[1] James, *op cit.*, page 538.

Thus the discovery, the unraveling of the skeins of Mexican desires, of Mexican psychological values, holds out the greater promise of understanding than any abstract analysis,—no matter how important that analysis may have been as the basis for our understanding.

The minds of men differ far more in their decisions (of what is worth while) than in the mere processes of their thoughts. The things we value are the results and the finger-posts of our race, traditions and environment. It is in the appreciation of the values that the Mexican puts upon life and its accompaniments that we fail most in understanding him.

Even Mexicans progressed beyond the limitations of their race fall down continually in their estimates of the psychology of the masses of their own people. They urge a study of the thought processes of the Indian at the same time that they endeavor to crowd his desires into models built for him by the Spanish conquerors. They speak of the need of "creating an indigenous soul", while they refuse to consider the fundamental facts of things desired which are the truest index of that soul.

The apparent inconsistencies in Mexican psychology are always to be explained primarily by the difference in and the struggle between the two races and cultures which have so long endeavored to merge themselves there. In preceding chapters we have found these differences and confusions of race and class inheritance, of environment and traditions, and noted their coloring of Mexican life and

their determining of the methods of thought of the Mexican mind to-day.

Here we seek to find the significant expressions of that mind, to set apart the desires whose realization it seeks. First, of course, are the creature comforts. The wants of the Mexican are comparatively few as compared with those of persons of his class in other lands. The peon's food is limited and cheap, but because he lives so near the line of pauperism, its need is a tremendous force in his life. His desire is less intense for shelter, for that is easily satisfied, because there is no severely cold weather, and no great protection is required, but taking the question of food and shelter as one, we find them most definite determinants of Mexican conditions. When food gives out, the peon of the present revolutionary era promptly takes a rifle on his shoulder to go out to war and plunder. This is partially due to political conditions which make readjustment difficult, but it also is indicative of the utter primacy of food. The American or English workman or farmer, with his job gone or crop a failure, will go out to seek new work, because to him there are higher needs than food alone, but the Mexican becomes a bandit almost immediately upon the loss of his means of sustenance, without looking further,—provided, of course, that conditions of banditry exist. Moreover, he is very likely to join the very bandit leader who ruined him, for that bandit he knows is successful. This attitude is distinctly that of the untrained individual and the backward civilization, for the almost mad search for food is com-

parable only to the savage or the beast. As a Mexican, Maqueo Castellanos, has put it, "Order depends more on whether there is corn than on whether there is authority. He who has nothing to defend and is hungry develops into a mercenary for any cause, at any moment. This is the idea which he holds more strongly and concretely than the idea of patriotism—the idea of self-preservation at all costs. And," he adds, "he is right."

Sex is the second great demand in the Mexican mind. Its practical and psychological phases are many, but whether we regard it as emotion, as a product of physical need or of intellectual contemplation, it is, as with all primitive peoples, the overwhelming call next to food. Although the social organization of Mexico does not make its gratification difficult, it is perhaps due to this very psychological need that conditions and the social system have shaped themselves as they have. There is an absence of love in marriage and indeed of any deep sentiment in connection with sex, for there is probably very little, if any, connection between sex and love in the Mexican mind, speaking of the people as a whole.

There is, however, a very definite love of home itself in the Mexican which may also be considered a true psychological desire. Aside from the pride which the Mexican takes in his household and particularly in his children, aside from the recognition he receives as a substantial citizen in being the father of a large family, the love of home is also bound up with a devotion to the place itself.

Moreover, the home life of Mexico is very beautiful in many ways. Wives are devoted and often are excellent mothers, so that home ties are deeper than is understood by most observers who have not been long residents of Mexico or who have not had the good fortune to live close to genuine Mexican homes. The peons and Indians live a largely savage life, but as the scale rises, a home life of patriarchal and even sentimental beauty takes its place and receives, as it deserves, a definite recognition among psychological needs.

The gratification of the "natural impulses" (of which sex is the greatest) is prized above honor and wealth by most Mexicans. The intellectual factors in Mexican emotion, the devotion of most of Mexican thought to sensation and the creation of sensation-impulses, are but evidences of this great psychological "value." Those who have watched the Mexican army during the past years of turmoil have had a picture, which will go with them through life, of the depths to which human sensuality can fall. These years of revolution have given the Mexicans the impression that the possession of a rifle or a revolver carries with it the right to take anything that may be desired, whether it be food and drink, comforts, or the bodies of women for their pleasure. The revolutionary armies (on both sides) are made up largely of boys of sixteen or thereabouts and of men past fifty,—the other men are at work in the fields or in the factories and mines. The men of fifty (who are old men in Mexico) are in the army for their peso a day, but the boys are there, not only

for the living that is in it, but for the opportunity which is given them for the utterly unbridled satisfaction of their lusts and passions,—for the privilege of assassination and for the privilege of giving the sex-urge untrammeled sway.

This shades into the love of what the Mexican peon calls "liberty", that is, the license to do what he will and act as he chooses. This is a desire which exists close to the animal plane and is comparable in no manner to the abstract "liberty" which has been the rallying cry of all normal men since the world began. In Mexico liberty is not a "national ideal" but a personal desire—license—and can never be justly placed in any other category. The revolutions against Spain were, as has been pointed out, originally Indian uprisings, and so far as "liberty and equality" were concerned, these were either the enunciations of the native-born whites (who, after ten years, took the revolution into their own hands), or else the license which "liberty and equality" alone means to the lower types of Mexicans.

The love of adornment is certainly to be grouped with Mexican psychological values. The Mexican pride in his hat is proverbial, and it would not be difficult of understanding save for the fact that he has so little pride in any other portion of his costume. Hats from ten pesos to one hundred pesos used to be the commonplace of the middle-class Mexican, and the peon who could possess even a straw hat with peaked crown and rolling brim adorned with tinsel immediately took a higher position with his fellows.

Pride, honor and dignity are deep sources of desire. Self-respect in Mexico demands recognition and so is very liable to receive it. Honors and position are likely to be displayed, yet without any more self-consciousness than would appear in the sometimes false modesty of the Anglo-Saxon. Pride of position has always been ground in, and its recent manifestations in the new ruling classes are as much atavistic as they are imitative. Even the prejudice against physical labor has a partial origin in this inherited pride and inherited recognition of class distinctions.

Class pride, indeed, is no mere word in the Mexican vocabulary. Class and caste persist through poverty and disgrace, and the story is told of an indigent Mexican father who refused to let his son earn an education by sweeping the school floors, because, he said, he did not send his son "to be taught to be a house servant." A similar instance of class pride touches on the story of a Mexican who, working as a clerk for two hundred pesos a month, received a legacy which would bring him one hundred and seventy-five pesos a month. He resigned his position at once, and when his employer protested, explained that he "would lose all standing with people" if he worked after he had received a legacy.

No gentleman will ever carry a package on the street, and servants often feel the pride of position as much as their masters. One case in point was that of a peon who was employed in the very lowly position of *portero* or *concierge* in the house of a

Mexican gentleman of ancient family. This *portero*, sent to purchase two lamp chimneys, returned in the course of an hour, marching grandly before a *cargador* or public porter, the latter bearing aloft, one in each hand, the two lamp chimneys. Even a cook in a respectable family will hire a *cargador* to transport her day's purchases home from the market place.

The preference of the Mexican youth for those callings in life which permit him to wear handsome clothes and do not require that he soil his hands is a trait which differs definitely from that of the youths of other lands who apparently display the same attributes. In general, Mexican youths desire not to meet the conditions of life as English or American boys do, but want to be physicians, poets, lawyers or bishops. It is perhaps unpractical education which is responsible, but the choice of this form of education goes deep into the psychology of the people themselves. The outward form has a tremendous significance to the Mexican, and the fact that he spends an overwhelmingly large portion of his income on equipage is sufficient proof of this. The Mexican family gives up everything in time of poverty, down to the furniture from the house, and discharges most of the servants, before it gives up its carriage or automobile. In the days of Diaz a glistening victoria with beautiful horses was a sign of position and honor, and this was retained to the last. Even after the family, forced by poverty, left the capital to live on the hacienda, the horse and carriage with the faithful

coachman were rented out by the day from a livery stable or took a place on the street for hire to any tourist, but were never sold.

Mexican writers inveigh against the so-called "vanity" of the middle class who endeavor to push themselves forward and lay claim to positions, social and business, above their normal standing. Here we touch upon the highly developed sense of personal dignity which characterizes the Mexican of every class. Among the peons, and almost in inverse ratio to their real worth, this takes the form of a false pride and an exaggerated idea of their own importance, which they assert (especially in their cups) with loud praise of the personal traits they have inherited from Indian ancestry. In the case of the middle class this *amour propre* takes on a form of excessive self-respect and self-esteem, with a defensive sensitiveness which the foreigner almost continually offends. Finally in the upper and really intelligent classes it becomes a true personal dignity and takes on the aspect of a high appreciation of position and responsibility.

A most typical story is told of a peon miner who entered a store kept by a Spaniard and asked for velvet. As he was dressed in the poorest sort of raiment the proprietor, with considerable sarcasm, asked him what he wanted to do with it, as there was none of a quality sufficiently cheap for him. The miner asked the price of the best and was told sneeringly that it was fifteen pesos a yard. He drew out a well-filled wallet, threw down thirty pesos, took the two yards of velvet and told the

storekeeper that such cloth was fit only for his burro and that he himself would not use it. He then took the velvet, put it on his burro and thereafter used it as a saddle blanket for the animal.

You cannot but feel a genuine affection for some of these childish outbursts and not a little admiration for the persistence of a mind which will carry through to such lengths. The pity of it is that the persistence is not turned in directions which are more profitable; it is such negative standards as these which are most often clung to with bulldog tenacity.

That tenacity to the rights of dignity must be accepted literally if one would work successfully with the Mexicans as they are. One successful American manager in the oil fields put it thus:

"You can handle any Mexican, even though he is paid like a peon, if you treat him like a gentleman. So I am always courteous to Mexicans of every grade, while I curse and roar at the Americans, and get better work out of them as a result. I reverse the process with the two types of employees: treat the American like a peon and pay him like a gentleman, and treat the Mexican like a gentleman and pay him like a peon."

Not all will agree on the wisdom of this manager's methods with his foreign employees, but his rule as it applies to Mexicans is significant in its success. The dignity and "sensitiveness" which are at its root take varying forms in Mexico. It is a fact that the expulsion of the American Red Cross from Mexico during the Carranza revolution was solely

because the organization's reports of conditions had offended the dignity of the Mexican nation, not because its services were not needed. A proverb expresses the native conception of the national dignity, "A Mexican is a man, but above all, he is a Mexican."

This Mexican honor, pride and sensitiveness, so much discussed, are indeed very real psychological desires, even if, as a none too appreciative American business man put it, "a Mexican uses his sensitiveness as a polecat uses *his* defensive faculties." The average Mexican, in private as well as in official life, sets great store upon his pride and sensitiveness, and even though we may consider them mostly the vaporings of an empty mind or the self-assertion of a conscious inferior, they and all their related manifestations remain, definitely, among those choices which determine the action of will.

Mexican honor as such is likely to strike the foreigner, especially the foreigner of Anglo-Saxon blood and training, as somewhat peculiar. As we have seen, it is more than likely to take the form of a greater concentration on the appearance of cleverness and ability to get the better of an opponent by foul means as well as fair—that is on prestige—than on the maintenance of one's own self-respect. It is peculiarly the characteristic of the Mexican of almost any class that you can call him every name in his long vocabulary of epithets, can accuse him of theft, arson and murder without arousing his very deep resentment—provided al-

ways that the conversation is between "man and man", that there is no outside person present. But let the least of these epithets or the mildest of these accusations be made in the presence of a third party, and insult and deep dishonor have been thrust upon an innocent and outraged victim.

Truth as a factor in honor is hardly given the importance which peoples of other races and training place upon it. As has been noted on earlier pages, the lie is not only a recognized factor of Mexican temperament and indeed of all Mexican life, but lying itself is not regarded as in the slightest sense a betrayal of one's personal honor.

The Mexican code of honor puts the highest valuation upon grace and charm rather than upon truth. To a Mexican truth is very likely to be disagreeable and is therefore objectionable, while grace and understanding are conveyed by the Spanish word *simpatico* (which will be understood by its correlation to the French word of similar form). It is this high estimate of charm and grace of manner, and kindliness of thought and action, which characterizes more than any single thing the Mexican idea of those social virtues which are worth while.

Mexican politeness is intimately associated with this appreciation of charm and grace. The Mexican thinks first of the immediate personal impression on his friend or the person to whom he wishes to be courteous. He will, from the best intentions in the world, cheerily inform him that the journey he must take will not occupy over an hour, although

he knows from personal experience that it will take three, because he does not wish to be the giver of bad news. But he is thoroughly frank about it all, although the difference between his actual feelings and the politeness of his courtesy is often very great. One of the most illuminating examples of this was unconsciously furnished by one of the old creole aristocrats of Mexico during the occupation of Vera Cruz by the American forces in 1914.

A close friend of his, an American lawyer, was offered the post of civil governor of the port under the occupation, a position which to those who overlooked the emphasis on national dignity in the Mexican mind might have seemed one from which the holder might exercise an authority which would be of great benefit to Mexicans and to his own standing with them. Hearing that his American friend had accepted the appointment, this Mexican gentleman offered his congratulations most sincerely when he accidentally met him. But the American had declined the honor, and when he told the Mexican, the latter grasped both his hands, and cried:

"Then I *do* congratulate you!"

The Mexican is extremely susceptible to praise, and this good coin of appreciation is perhaps purer gold in Mexico than in any other spot in the world. Sincere appreciation breaks down every wall and surmounts every enmity, but the foreigner who attempts it must be sure in his own heart that he means what he says, else woe betide him in his

attempts at flattery. The Mexican's apparent flattery is a form of politeness, but the Mexican knows when to accept it as politeness with the valuation which politeness receives in Mexico and when to accept it as a true expression of personal esteem and appreciation. This, the foreigner is not likely to be able to do, so that in his choice of words and of phrases he does well to know that he means exactly what he tells the Mexican in his friendship.

Prestige on an intellectual plane has its decided place in the list of Mexican values. The Mexican desires prestige and knowledge as he desires many other pleasant things in life, but when he comes to weigh that prestige against the effort which would be required to achieve it, he is very likely to find that the effort is more than the prestige is worth. This psychological attitude toward education has a most important bearing on the entire educational problem. In education, as in nearly everything else, the Mexican of whatever class must truly be convinced that any effort required of him is well worth the cost.

Continual diversion is the best of safety valves for racial and personal ambitions which have been suppressed or even forgotten in national and individual crises, and the forms of play and amusement are, as we have seen, a definite psychological need of the Mexican.

Money and property come in the varying points in the scale of desires. In the upper classes the ownership of lands belongs in the category of pride

and honor; in the middle class, including the rancheros, or small farmers, land ownership is very largely a matter of food and clothing, as well as pride of position. In the lower classes, however, the ownership of land means more often the holding of a property which can be be converted into cash, which in its turn can go for food, comforts and amusements. This is proven again and again by the sale of small properties to rancheros or hacendados as soon as communal properties have been broken up. This phenomenon is like that which the United States has witnessed time and again in years past, during the break-up of the Indian reservations, comparable to the communal lands of the Indians of Mexico. A second (if secondary) reason for the peon's interest in land comes from his love of the *tierra*, the soil itself. The Indian loves the land of his birth and the mixed-blood Mexican has a similar feeling. In both it is extremely localized, and this of itself makes the ownership of that particular property of sentimental importance.

It seems perfectly sound to place the desire for money, as such, low in the scale of Mexican values. The average Mexican works for his living and comfort, and seldom for the money or the power which accompanies money. Tied up with the conception of money is the land question just stated. Purchasers of railway rights of way in Mexico often found it difficult to buy land that was identified as the owner's *tierra*. Mexicans again and again refused to sell their home sites at almost any price.

One man refused three hundred dollars an acre for the land on which his house was built, but offered to sell land of the same quality across the fence for fifty cents an acre. Another instance bearing on the primacy of living over money is the story of a peon who refused to sell a piece of timber land which a railroad wished to use as a terminal, but offered to cede the property without price, providing he were given the contract of clearing it of timber at the ordinary charge for such work. This Mexican wanted not the money for the land, but the work which would support him.

This failure to connect money and living instinctively is a psychological complex which is significant. It goes back to the feudal days and to the habit of the lower-class Mexican of looking to his patron and to his hacienda for the necessities of life. Living from day to day, purchasing food for three meals only, as is the custom throughout all Mexico, the value of money, as such, lessens, and the value of work is over-emphasized. It may well be that it is to this valuation that we must trace the fact that the Mexican laborer works slowly and apparently listlessly through endless hours. In the earlier revolutionary period, and in the present period of unrest, the crowded cities and the sparse population in the countryside, the naked children starving and fighting with dogs over refuse from the garbage piles, the buyers and sellers of old clothes, all present a picture that may well explain it. A Mexican sociologist has discussed its psychology in describing the period previous to 1876:

Men who were given work worked as slowly as they could for fear that there would not be any more work. The sole idea was to keep work ahead. Hunger made these people delay completion for fear they would have no more chance to earn their living. They received 37 centavos, silver, for a twelve-hour day. Now (in the time of Diaz) the Mexican laborer has been able to count on daily work, and the Mexican is more ready to work than one credits him with being. Up to now there has been so little for him to do in comparison with the number who needed work that the situation has led to the conditions which are generally described as chronic.[1]

Such an attitude accounts for much of the clinging of the Mexican to the peonage system. He finds in the assurance of steady work both his independence and his self-respect. He is even suspicious if he is offered money, for that seems to mean that he is going to lose his job, which is far more of an insurance to him than such an uncertain and unproductive commodity as money. The lower-caste Mexican wishes to be carefree, and the possession of great capital is less significant to him than a debt which guarantees him a job.

The attitude of the American or European toward money as an intrinsic thing was in old days quite incomprehensible to the Mexican. To him, the giving of money was no different from the giving of food, or the giving of a gift which may or may not have actual money value. Part of the hospitality of the Mexican home in the simpler era was the leaving of loose change in the guest room for the use of the visitor, if need arose.

[1] Julio Guerrero, "La Génesis del Crimen en México," Mexico City, 1916, page 138.

This brings us directly to the subject of patriarchal dependence, one of the basic facts of Mexican relationships. It seems fair to consider this as a true psychological desire. Only under a patriarchal régime can one laugh and be happy and live without money. The childlike character of the Mexican in his inheritance from the Indian demands a helping hand and the right to play and to work and to have a revolution without the unhappy formalities which modern civilization requires as accompaniments of these recreations. Confiding and simple, the lower class seeks cheerily to go to some one else in an emergency. The upper classes enjoy the rôle of protector, and so the circle is complete, and the Mexican desire finds expression in a quite beautiful paternalism.

The desire for a chief who will take an interest and at the same time will be a master appears always in Mexican history and in the relations of Mexicans to their employers. One might even suggest that President Carranza's leaning toward the German side in the Great War may be traceable to the instinctively Mexican desire for a master, which is a rôle the German enjoys filling.

The devotion to an understanding master is one of the deep traits of Mexican character. An American engineer tells of stopping on a night march for a few hours' rest *en route* to a forest fire and of sleeping at a height of twelve thousand feet with a band of Mexicans, each of whom had only his single blanket. Yet, when the American awoke after a brief rest, he found that three

of the Indians had covered him with their own *zarapes*.

Only one instance more, and we must leave the discussion of Mexican desires. The attitude of the Indian toward the Emperor Maximilian—who came with his fair blond beard and his retinue of European courtiers, his shiploads of silver plate and gilded coaches—was like what they might have shown to a Messiah. They loved him for his splendor and they loved him for the spirit in which they and he believed he had come. A liberator is to them always something sublime and beautiful, something which they can worship and love.

A similar sight greeted those who came to Mexico City with Madero on that wonderful triumphal journey from the mountains of the north. It took him four days to make the seven hundred miles from Parras, his home, to the capital, for by day and night he was greeted at every station by hundreds and thousands of people who regarded him, as he did himself, as their deliverer. By foot and horseback came all the people of the villages, and as if by that strange telepathy which prevails among savage peoples, the crowd came to stations where no word was ever known to have been sent that Madero was coming. He, too, was received as a deliverer and greeted with wonderful affection and appreciation by a people who called him "the apostle" and made his trip to Mexico a triumphal journey comparable to any in all history.

This was not Madero any more than it was Maximilian; any more than it was Diaz at the

height of his power, or Juarez, in his old black coach during his long years of exile in the interior. It was the spirit of a simple people welling up to express itself, to express the thing which it had convinced itself stood for its greatest need. Unstable it doubtless was, but it was Mexico, and in Mexico it was beautiful and significant, perhaps the most significant of all the desires which have found expression,—the long search, the pitiful search for the leader, for the understanding master who will solve the pressing problems of the people's miserable life.

CHAPTER IX

THE MEXICAN CROWD

SIGNIFICANT, interesting, illuminating as is the study of the mind process of the individual, the true differentiation of one people from all their fellows does not appear until we find our way into the dynamic realm of group behavior. It is like dropping the whittling of dolls to take up the chisel and shape a statue out of living marble to move from the psychology of the individual Mexican to the psychology of the Mexican group. Here action takes the place of static observation, and the throbbing hope of a real redemption replaces the mere recording of the sorry list of enslaved mentalities.

In the observation of the Mexican mind in its group functionings, we find as many faults of action, as many apparently unworthy motives and hopeless failures as in its individual manifestations. But here we find, too, the tremendous, the encouraging fact, that all these individual and group manifestations point to one pregnant condition—the long existence of the Mexican upon the lower planes of mind life. Here we learn that he has not degenerated from a higher individual and group existence, but that he is struggling along the long hard road of human advancement, the road which

humanity has traveled before him, and that his failures are in his being yet only on the road. He is reaching, through the mazes of his primitive mind, for those gains which make our life a harder struggle, perhaps, but at least a struggle in the open and not in those dark halls of hopelessness in which the Mexican people must still find their way.

In that darkness their minds grope, minds, as we have seen, different in myriad ways from our own, moving on different planes and with values and methods of thought which we perhaps never touched in all our long race history. There would be horror if, once raised to a higher level, they had slipped back the centuries which their present condition seems to indicate. But as we study their group life we shall come once more to the conclusion which has been stated in this book and elsewhere,—that it is deep race heritage and tradition that has kept the Mexicans for so long from the light of progress and civilization. In this, they are far better off than lands where, with greater knowledge, with higher ideals inculcated in youth by education and example, the mass and some of the leaders as well, have slipped back to the lower planes, and, despite their knowledge, live content within the self-seeking realm of hunger for only the animal desires.

The human struggle upward from the animal to the true social and socialized life has been epitomized as the emergence through four planes, four planes on which there are thirteen "hungers", thirteen vital desires, each of which in its turn

has dominated the life of the individual and formed the life of the human group. We can literally test the civilization of any individual or group or nation by finding the "hungers" in this list which dominate his or its life. Such a test will just here clarify our concept of the Mexican group-mind.

The four groups and the thirteen social hungers[1] are these:

I. Ontogenetic (Individual evolution): 1. Hunger for nutrition. 2. Brute assertion. 3. Fear, the dawning of thought for self-preservation.

II. Phylogenetic (Group evolution): 4. Sex-hunger. 5. Hunger for offspring, the dim beginnings of altruism. 6. Kin-sympathy, tribal organization, but not widely altruistic.

III. Ecogenetic (Evolution of Property): 7. Hunger for wealth. 8. Hunger for economic dominance. 9. Hunger for place and caste.

IV. Sociogenetic (Social evolution): 10. Hunger for knowledge, the beginnings of desire for identification with the cosmos. 11. Ideals, the hunger for completeness and for true feeling. 12. A socialized will, the hunger for an idealized society and for self-investment in its weal. 13. God-consciousness, the supreme hunger and the supreme cosmic dynamic, for the summation of reason, feeling and volition.

With this rod-stick in hand, it is not difficult to realize that the Mexican as a group has only a foot-

[1] The list is taken without apology from the charts in the published lecture notes of the author's honored master, Doctor Daniel Moses Fisk, Professor of Sociology at Washburn College.

hold on the third plane, that of materialism, and has virtually no conception of the fourth plane with its great social hungers for the welfare of the race. This is true not only of the lower types of Indians but of the vast majority of the upper ranks of mestizos, only a few of whom have begun to manifest even the none too elevated hungers for econonomic dominance and place. The rarity of the type of man who has even the desire for knowledge in its higher sense (outside its immediate value in his business) has always been remarked in Mexico, the paucity of libraries and centers of higher education throughout the country being sufficient evidence.

It is interesting to note that the régime of Diaz, when Mexico reached the zenith of her progress (up to the present), was devoted to the hope of raising the mass of the Mexicans to the full benefits of the third or ecogenetic plane, where what we commonly call ambition manifests. The directing hand was that of Porfirio Diaz and of the men about him, men dominated primarily perhaps by the hunger for place and power, but lightened also by the higher hungers for knowledge and for the idealized society toward which they alone of all the Mexicans seemed to be reaching.

Below them, as ever, was the mass of the people, dominated by the fear impulses, with the cunning, the sham and the jealousy, the self-defensives and the cruelties which, motivated by brute assertion, are the mimic of the clear-eyed, reasoning will of the higher, social plane. That mass is there to-day,

and their entire group life is made up of these reactions, with never, in all the sweep of their activities, one rift in the clouds of race-inheritance toward the higher realms of feeling and altruism.

It is just this persistence that makes men of other races and other cultures fail and fail again in understanding the Mexicans of to-day—we cannot believe that the motives of the higher realms are missing, and most of all we cannot believe that they have never existed in the Mexican mind. The tragedy of all our dealings with them has been either that we have appealed in vain to the higher motives which we cannot conceive as being absent, or that we have relegated the entire company of Mexicans to the rôle of degenerates because we know, with cynical assurance, that they have "lost" all semblance of the higher desires which alone could respond on that plane. In both we are wrong, and until we realize this, we shall struggle uselessly either to touch and stir or to understand them. It is not that they have hidden those qualities, or that the whole people have lost them. They have never reached to that plane, and in this there is no blame or any basis for discouragement. Rather the fact, so patent on analysis, is a beacon of hope; for they can and, heaven willing, they shall rise to it, through education and a broader socialization.

In the individual psychology of the Mexican we have found many faults and a few virtues; in the crowd we shall find fewer virtues and greater faults. But this is a law of the group, a tragic law to be sure, but one that works on every people, be they

Hottentots or Scandinavians; and Mexico comes under its sway. But the group which has never achieved to great virtue gives, verily, more to be hoped for than that which has been great and good and has fallen from its high estate. In the group we enter a field where the individual is but an atom. So in this study let us continue to ignore the pitiable, tiny parcel of leaders who, ignorant of all but the struggle for power and money, are exploiting not only the world without, its capitalists, its workers and its diplomats, but also their own people, people who on their own plane of virtually tribal communism have in themselves the seeds of development.

Thus we come to a phase of the still controversial study of "crowd psychology" which is relatively simple. The scientists have, since crowd psychology was enunciated, struggled with the difficult adaptation of the idea of the individual will to the "group mind." Rousseau first noted the difficulty when he said that the "will of all" is seldom the "general will." A more recent authority has put it more completely:

> The aggregate which is society has, in virtue of its past history. positive qualities which it does not derive from the units which compose it at any one time; and in virtue of these qualities it acts upon its units in a manner very different from that in which the units as such interact with each other.[1]

In Mexico, while this difference between individual and group behavior exists, there is a surpris-

[1] William MacDougall, "The Group Mind," New York, 1920, page 9.

ing absence of the confusion which psychologists find in other peoples. The group mind is indeed less worthy than the individual mind, but the tremendous hold of tradition makes the domination of the group will virtually inevitable. This is of itself an important simplification of the problem of Mexican group psychology, and at the same time a tempting invitation for the uplift of the Mexican through the intelligence of his more cultured white brothers.

Individually the typical Mexican seldom thinks for himself above the purely animal plane, but in the group he has his strength of tradition and his fixed criterions of importance and unimportance. All these go back to the tribal organization in which, very literally, he still lives. There the old self-defensive and self-assertive instincts are at work, and with the sanction of the group, the Indian functions with inevitable precision and goes to battle, to pillage, to rape and ruin, and cheerfully to his own annihilation, if the group mind and the group traditions advocate it. The comparison is easy if we take but the one example of individual responsibility.

In highly organized societies, crime is personal and moral responsibility is on the individual; in tribal life the whole clan shares the crime and the responsibility,—even though the clan may not hold its individuals to account. On this latter plane dwells the Mexican, and we must realize this fact if we would understand the primary bases of his relationship to the world. Even in his predatory stealing,

looting, raping, the Mexican acts usually in a group, and it is seldom, even in the present disturbed days, that an individual steals or kills alone.

The paradox of the petty pilfering of a servant, when surrounded by others, and the honesty and devotion of perhaps the same servant when vested alone with the responsibility of the household, in the master's absence, has puzzled many observers. It seems, however, to be resolved immediately by applying this simple standard of group morality. It follows the inevitable law that if, by appeal or example, the individual can be lifted from under the ægis of his traditions, he reaches at once toward the higher plane to which, by the history of his race, he is tending through the inevitable growth up the ladder of the thirteen "hungers" and the four planes of human unfoldment.

But it is rare indeed that this load of tradition can be lifted. The foreign companies operating in Mexico have sought wisely, but doubtless without a consciousness of the ladder of social hungers which we are discussing, to lift the peon by opening the horizon of the pleasures of comfort and well-being which we have classified as ecogenetic. Indeed, the burden of about all the sociology which has ever been applied to the Mexican problem has had to do with the idea of an "increase of wants", so that the peon, finding his necessities growing, would increase his earning power. A large proportion of all modern civilization has been built on this idea, and it may, indeed, be the way of escape for the Mexican. But the experience of managers

has tended to but two ends: one has found that the Indian, when paid more money, does not increase his wants but rather reduces his working days; the other discovers that the increase of wants does not effect an increase of efficiency but, instead, a dogged insistence, in the form of strikes or sabotage, on an increase in pay without any increase in efficiency. The "higher standard of living" inculcated in this way is not, in other words, a far-reaching success, and the bewilderment of the experimenting foreigners is appalling.

Here, once more, it seems that we hark back to the group-mind, the domination of tradition, the cruel grip of the old fear-régime, when there was not work enough or food enough to go round. Work had to be conserved by slowness and living won by such force as the weakling could muster, chiefly the standing still and howling like a child till he got what he wanted. Often has the foreigner found that when, in response to a bonus system, a few of his workmen gained greater pay, the immediate result was a strike in which the beneficiaries joined with the "unfortunates" in a demand for equal pay,—on the higher scale.

The failure of all efforts to induce a general climb on the part of the Mexican to the plane of ambition for economic improvement has its roots in that fatalism which, too, is at root traditional. There has never been any successful attempt, by education or otherwise, to connect the sequences of seed time and harvest, effort and reward.

To the child of that old day (and the Mexican in

his group life is obviously but a child of the ancient savage time) what will be will be, despite all human effort. In the group thinking or rather feeling which is characteristic of such a period, the individual mind seeks nothing and learns nothing; the desire for knowledge is still far off up the long ladder. Thus we account, and thus only can we account, for the alternate spells of activity and apathy in the Mexican. The peon plants his fields with enthusiasm and hope, and then waits for the months of ripening without cultivation, without care for the weeds, and, indeed, with fatalistic apathy toward the forces of nature. Only if the gods or fate allow will he have a crop. The domination of the group-mind, the absence of the still distant awakening to true reason of any kind, keeps him still on the plane of the beasts.

With this background the forms of organization in Mexico can be (and actually are) of but one kind,—what the sociologists call will-organizations. Thought organizations are utterly nonexistent, and the will-organizations, as we shall see, have absorbed all the functions of thought-organization, borrowing often from others ideals and systems ill adapted to the needs of the country and the people.

Primary among the will-organizations are the essentially tribal units which form Mexican society. We have noted above the links of family and kinship, and the *compadre* system, which is virtually a blood-brother process of adoption and thus essentially savage. These tribal groupings persist throughout Indian Mexico, and tribal and village

feuds are met with on any journey that takes one among the natives. The devotion of the Mexican to his little bit of territory, his *tierra* or birthplace, and his genuine scorn of any other portion of his country or any foreign country, is in itself a survival of the old tribal idea and a very real phase of the tribal organization as it exists to-day. The entire history of Mexico has been the struggle to make a nation in the face of tremendously disintegrating elements. It is doubtful if, without the Spanish ideals which still dominate it and link a supreme individualism with a deep subservience to the State as such, the Mexican national organization would have persisted. As it is, the national organization is in grave peril to-day, when the governing group of the country is to all intents and purposes a federation of tribal chieftains, each controlling a section of the country and a handful of followers (usually all of the same Indian tribe or mestizos with some lingering memory of tribal relationship).

The form of Mexican will organization which at the present time is occupying the most attention, inside and outside of Mexico, is rooted in the ancient communism from which the tribal divisions also spring. The reference is to the so-called socialistic unions and syndicates which are dominating most of the political and industrial life of the country. Previous to the outbreak of socialism and bolshevism in Europe following the Great War, there was in Mexico little nation-wide trade unionism or socialistic organization. In the latter days of the war, through German socialists, who had

come or had remained in Mexico as part of the German spy organization there, and American radicals who, opposed to war, had made their escape from the draft by flying to the friendly shadows of Carranza's flag, Mexico began to have an awakening in both directions. As a result the country had become something of a hotbed of socialistic propaganda. Laborers of every type have been organized, not along the lines of the American and British trade unions, but along syndicalist forms, feeding, as a natural result, on the communistic instincts of the Indian element, and thus forming a natural circle around to the original form of tribal will grouping.

At base, then, the groups of Mexico are all forms of the will or traditional-volitional organization. And here again we swing back to the fundamentals of group organization which in the modern world are discovered to be in three definite forms.[1] first, the individualists, finding the force of their will in the institution of private property; second, the socialists or collectivists, basing their power on the idea of the State, and third, the syndicalists, non-local associations based primarily on the occupational rakings. These divisions in their turn hark back to the divisions along the cleavage of the property instinct, varying of course in the different races and nations of the world.

In Europe, and to a lesser extent in the United States, the idea of the individualists has been

[1] *Cf.* Graham Wallas, "The Great Society," New York, 1913, pages 290–291.

gradually breaking down. The factory system, taking the place of the old domestic system of production, has tended toward the elimination of the ideas of individualism and the primacy of property, so that the shift toward the concept of the social obligations and duties of capital (which is property) has come gradually. The slow evolution away from the old idea of the "identity of interest between producer and consumer" has also come with relative slowness, giving at least some time for adaptation, as concentration has taken the place of competition. But in Mexico these changes have come with a suddenness which has wrought an appalling confusion.

Still in the age, largely, of domestic and individual production, she has had swept down upon her the whole avalanche of modern thought. The most "advanced" sort of theories have been handed to her with literally no background of experience and slow adaptation by which to adjust them. The result has been that she has fastened the modern shibboleths of socialism to the most archaic type of communism existing in the world, and collectivism and syndicalism are jumbled with more complete chaos than is to be found even in Russia. Those who find food for fear in the rapid evolution of the socialistic principles of the British or American workingman will find themselves happy indeed to go back to that homely apprehension after a contemplation of the chaos of Mexican working conditions.

The psychological attitude of the Mexican group

toward its so-called "social revolution" (and here we can discuss only those psychological attitudes) has been set forth with exceeding clearness by the I. W. W. organizer, John Murray.[1]

In describing the invasion and sacking of Mexico City by General Alvaro Obregon (later president of Mexico) Mr. Murray wrote:

After Felix Diaz ran away, after Huerta fled, General Obregon held Mexico City for the Constitutionalist government. Meanwhile, Zapata was blowing up trains and generally demoralizing traffic in and out of the City of Mexico, so that bread was scarce and the people threatened with starvation.[2] The mills which ground corn for the public entirely failed to provide *masa* for the people, and women were making long trips into the country to get the wherewithal to make bread. Bakeries had notices posted in front of their shops stating that they had no flour. Only English biscuits sold in a few shops catering to the rich and were purchasable at a rate of from four to eight dollars a kilo.

Then it was that General Alvaro Obregon, commanding the Constitutionalist troops in the City of Mexico, made a declaration that "the merchants did not accept the invitation which was made to them to assist the people in their dire need, and thus prevent violence."

"The time has come," he added, "when the people may make use of a right (the right of revolution), which in other circumstances would be prohibited to them, and which any authority would have to oppose. Authority can never be the authority of anybody, but of justice only, and should dispense justice to persons or collectivities if they deserve it, but when

[1] "Behind the Drums of Revolution," *The Survey*, New York, December 2, 1916, Volume XXXVII, pages 237–244.

[2] Mr. Murray does not accept the report that General Obregon shipped carloads of corn and beans out of Mexico City to be sold for the profit of the Carranza generals and for the maintenance of their armies in the field.

one part of the community turns away from justice and uprightness, the government should not defend it against a sacred right which it has placed in the people's hands." [1]

Soon after, the *Casa del Obrero Mundial*[2] met with Rafael Zubaran Capmany[3] and signed an agreement in which the Constitutionalist government officially recognized their mutuality of aims. Thousands of workingmen paraded through the streets of Mexico, headed by the red flag, and were saluted by the staff officers of General Obregon as they passed his headquarters in the St. Francis Hotel.

The following pact was signed between organized labor and the Constitutionalist government officially, the first time in history, as far as I am aware, that a National government ever entered into a working agreement with a labor organization.

Here Mr. Murray inserts in full the text of the famous "treaty" by which the government agreed only to "attend with all the solicitude it has used up to date, to the workers' just claims arising from their labor contracts with their employers" and the *Casa del Obrero Mundial* pledged itself to furnish its membership for police force (with remuneration) and also to "carry on an active propaganda to win sympathy for the Constitutionalist government among all the workers throughout the republic and the working-class world, pointing out to the Mexican workingmen the advantages of joining the revolution, inasmuch as it will bring about the improvement the working

[1] This quotation is of great significance as an essentially sympathetic presentation of General Obregon's famous "invitation to loot" which was posted throughout Mexico City during his occupation.

[2] Literally, the House of the Workers of the World—the I. W. W.

[3] Later Minister of Commerce and Industry in the cabinet of President Obregon.

class is seeking through its unions." The final clause provides that:

> The workers who take up arms in the Constitutionalist government and also the female workers who perform service in aiding or attending the wounded, or other similar service will be known under the one denomination; whether organized in companies, battalions, regiments, brigades or divisions, all will be designated as "*Reds.*"

There were many such "Red" units in the Constitutionalist army, and apologists for General Obregon have always stated that his agreement with the *Casa del Obrero Mundial* was because he needed new troops and found this an excellent and easy way to get them. Carranza afterward broke with the *Casa del Obrero Mundial* and for a time during his régime the organization was ostensibly and officially dissolved. It later assumed its old place and importance.

Mr. Murray goes on after setting forth the agreement:

> It is plain why organized labor supported the Constitutionalist government in Mexico: food, guns in workers' hands, opportunity to organize, to strike and raise the standard of living, all this was reason enough. But what inducement was it that persuaded middle-class Mexicans to become upholders of a governmental programme that called for land nationalization and all the preliminary steps that led to a socialization of industry? I found scores of men like Constitutionalist Secretary of State Cabrera; Secretary of Gobernacion Zubaran; the general who practically snatched Mexico from the reaction, Obregon; men educated in Paris and Berlin, like Atl and Rolland—and all that class which in every other country under the sun shys at the nationalization of anything

and constitutes the most bitter enemy of militant labor organizations, here in Mexico falling one over another to propose new steps whereby the resources of Mexico could be put into the hands of government.

Mr. Murray did not answer his own question, save by the Mexican method of producing an analogy and further examples, citing the famous speech of Roque Estrada, one of Carranza's supreme court judges, who in administering the oath to a group of new judges is quoted as declaring:

"You will say to me that there are articles to be adhered to contained in a book called 'Law,' but I must remind you that we are condemning and rejecting all that has previously taken place and that there exist no laws or regulations which bind us to any definite procedure, and so it becomes necessary to apply a strictly revolutionary spirit in order that the administration of justice may answer its purpose in fulfilling the aspirations of the revolution, which has now materialized into a government."

No better statement of the Mexican "socialistic" movement from within has ever been written than this frank and cynical description of Mr. Murray.[1] It goes far, however, to support the assertion made above that the chaos of the Mexican radical movement has been made complete by the confusion of foreign ideas with ancient Mexican

[1] A valuable analysis of the Constitution of 1917, the palladium of Mexican "socialistic" liberties, has been done by Lic. Jorge Vera Estañol, former Minister of Education of Mexico: J. Vera Estañol, "Al Margen de la Constitucion de 1917," Los Angeles, 1920. The English translation, unfortunately called "Carranza and His Bolsheviki Constitution", was also published. *The Wayside Press*, Los Angeles, 1920.

communism. The incidents described by Mr. Murray and the documents cited are all, obviously, the product or inspiration of foreign radicals like himself, while the actual developments in the history of the movement indicate that the true stimulating element is not the foreign spirit but the native, ingrained conception of communistic ownership.

The land and labor questions in Mexico have been described elsewhere[1] and the psychology of the Mexican, working as a group from the ancient traditions surrounding these two factors, has tended to take every new idea from without and shape it to forms as old as Mexico itself. The idea of the nationalization of land and industry becomes, thus, the idea of land distribution for the benefit of the lowly, who thus achieve, not socialization, but individual property again, property to be disposed of as promptly as possible for a circulating medium which can be spent. The only residuum of socialization that is desired is the possession of communal lands of the old Indian type; but this alone is not satisfactory, for there must also be personal redistribution so that the beneficiaries may sell and enjoy the proceeds.

The basic difficulty with foreign socialistic ideas is and has always been that the Mexican, due to his Indian antecedents, demands this communal condition but does not at the same time accept communal responsibility. On the "socialistic" plane he fails even more than on the plane of individual

[1] *Cf.* "The People of Mexico," pages 315 *et seq.*

property, through his utter inability to work anything out without the substantial aid of paternal guidance of some sort. He had this under the Aztec rule, in his own princes; he had it under the Spaniards in the firm if sometimes ill-considered rule of the viceroys and of the rising aristocracy of Spanish and lightly diluted mixed-bloods; after a welter of revolutions which were in essence chiefly a quarrel over whether the whites or the mestizos should have the privileges and the profits of government, he had this same paternalistic protection under Diaz. His chief psychological difficulty in the past ten years has been frankly the removal of this paternalistic support. In the final analysis he is still in the stage where genuine disinterested leadership is needed, and needed badly, to carry on his development for a few years or perhaps for a few generations longer. Foreign socialism has not yet—nor will it soon—evolve such leadership in the Mexicans themselves.

But the world has been hurrying forward, and because of the deep communal sense of the Mexican, because of the continuing truth that fishing is best in troubled waters, Mexico has become a rich field for "socialistic" exploitation. The result has been that much has been done in the name of socialism and the "social revolution" which in other times has been done under other names.

Meanwhile, the "drums of revolution" roll on, and Mexico and the Mexicans march to their rhythm. But behind the drums is to be found, not the mere retailing of incident and the picturing of

the strength of foreign radical ideas in Mexico, as Mr. Murray found, but rather the age-long social organization of the Mexican group. This, in literal fact, is the fundamental of her life. The relationship of the Mexican groups concern us far more, in the long view which we are seeking of the Mexican mind, than any outbreak of borrowed national or radical ideas.

Mexico is divided, by the exigencies of her racial, political and industrial history, by most distinct class and caste cleavages. These are the essential group formations, and the spirit of caste has a distinct bearing on the whole psychology of the country. This condition is likely to be more easily understood in England than in the United States, although in actuality the Mexican acceptance of the distinct class groupings is by no means comparable to the English conception of such divisions.

There is, however, a surprising lack of servility,—the Mexican, from peon to president, is apparently thoroughly satisfied with his lot, or willing, at least, to make the best of it.

The peon on the street is utterly unconscious of his often dirty clothing, and except that his politeness (for which we have to thank the Roman Catholic Church much more than any racial inheritance) makes him give the inside of the walk, closest to the wall, to his social superiors, might himself be the master of the town which he regards with such calm assurance. A writer on Mexico in the early days records his astonishment at the assurance of

the driver of the mule pack-train with which his carriage traveled through some of the bandit-ridden country and quoted the peroration of "Jose Maria Sanchez, *arriero* (mule driver) of Mexico", who told, with truth, of the trust which was put in him by great hacendados and noble families, and how that trust was never betrayed.

For all this apparent contentment of the Mexicans of the various classes with their positions there is a very significant psychological factor in the relationships of the different classes to one another. The upper-class Mexican—and this is truest of the old aristocracy of pre-revolutionary days—has a considerable conception of responsibilities. True, he does not always live up to this conception, but that is rather the fault of his social system than of his personal or indeed his group psychology.

The upper-class Mexican regards the lower with a strange mixture of distance and brotherhood. Eternally their instinct is to consider themselves as a people apart, but as inevitably they return to the consciousness of their unity with the lower classes and of the singleness of the national problem. In all his discouragement, in all the misery of his exile, the high-class Mexican of to-day looks upon Mexico as home, knows how the national problem affects his life and his family and seeks no other outlet than the regeneration of Mexico itself. A denizen of European capitals, often a voluntary expatriate, he is still at heart a Mexican, bound to her by ties as deep and sincere as those which bind the Englishman in distant colonies to England.

To him, whether he watches in Mexico or from exile, the peon and the Indian are somewhat half-human, happy when crops are good and work is plenty, miserable when the rains fail or work is gone. The responsibility is on the aristocrat, as he knows only too well, and sometimes he grows weary with its hopelessness, longing to turn his back upon it, but never really forgetting, never really shirking,—so far as his knowledge and wisdom may go.

Racially, the conflict of the individuals within the crowd has definite reactions which influence the whole. The white creole and foreigner look upon the Indian and upon the mestizo with a certain smug tolerance, for the conscious superiority of the European and the man of European blood is an axiom of all the world. The disdain with which one class looks on another can and has been fanned into wrath and into war and destruction at various periods in Mexico's history. This feeling has a conventional form in the various race divisions. The Indian, for instance, is the football of all other classes. A government report of 1886 speaks of "a people converted into a pack of wolves which is managed with . . . harshness." A Mexican writer describes the Indians as "a parasitic race lacking in applied will." The Indian, on his part, returns the compliment. He despises the mestizo and hating the whites, as he has been roused to doing when it has suited the convenience of revolutionaries and bandits, has taken the chief part in hundreds of uprisings against his alleged oppressors, whether

Spaniards, Frenchmen, creoles or mestizo bureaucrats under Diaz.

During the period when class lines were identical with those of race—that is in Colonial times and in the early days of the Independence—caste antagonisms were always sharply defined. The foreigner has ever been more or less a common enemy, but the creole was regarded by the mestizo and Indian as very nearly as much of a foreigner as the Spaniard from whom he came. The 1910 revolution has been described as a "Boxer" uprising against the foreigners, and indeed the list of charges made by General Bernado Reyes against the Diaz administration were almost entirely concerned with anti-foreign and chiefly anti-American problems, and race antagonism and race jealousy thus became national fetishes.

The most significant development of the race classes in Mexico is, however, the patriarchal system. Its origin goes back to the time of the Spaniards and beyond them into the communal organization of the Aztecs, and its history brings us down to the Diaz régime. "Abolished" finally by constitutions and edicts, it still continues in that mightier source of power, the will of the people. The Indian, lost in the mazes of Spanish culture and mestizo administration, clung like a drowning man to the traditional system which was all he had known for centuries.

This suits the economics of his existence, for, improvident by nature, he cannot understand the need of making his labor build not only for to-day

but for a possible to-morrow of misfortune. The Indian, therefore, prefers to work his little farm on "shares" with the owner of the hacienda, for then if his crops fail the hacendado will take care of him. On the other hand, if the Indian is the proprietor and if, through inadequate rainfall or his own ineptitude, his farm produces nothing, he faces starvation and is more than likely to succumb to it, or to find his way into the army or to the inhospitable cities.

The patriarchal system is thus a most important psychological fact in Mexico. All who have handled Mexican labor know that those who succeed best with it are those who approach nearest to a paternalistic attitude. It may be impossible for the manager of a big plant to know all of his employees by their first name, to know the family history, how many children there are, and everything connected with the household, but unless the manager or employer does know this, the workman feels that the proper interest is not being taken, and he broods over this neglect until he feels that the employer is not treating him fairly, whereupon he is willing to be as disloyal as he would be loyal under other circumstances.

The long ramifications of the patriarchal system start, properly, with the hacienda. Through the paternal aid of the great landowners of the early days, a whole people was carried upon the shoulders of a single class of rich and intelligent individuals. Communism and feudalism were there thrown together and mixed under conditions which brought

forth elements of destruction and elements of imperishable solidity. The system bred an immense class of dependents, ready tools of the propaganda of the discontented and ambitious, but the system also furnished and continues to furnish a solid background of invested capital and property rights which have made it possible for Mexico to survive all the horrors which have come upon her.

It seems doubtful if Mexico would long retain either her national form or even the gains of her "borrowed" civilization without the system of dependence. It is significant that under Obregon Villa, the arch "patriot", found that a hacienda was the most natural and proper place to which he might retire during his period of idleness while enjoying his pension from Obregon.

Villa's acceptance of the hacienda as his natural retreat after the years of his battle for place and power emphasizes another phase of the caste system. This is the social ladder, which operates in Mexico according to much the same principles under which it operates in England, for instance. The analogy is only academic, but it is a fact that in Mexico, as in England, the highest honors of the land, including place in the aristocracy, are within the reach of every citizen. This is more than the mere effulgence of democratic ideals, for the social ladder of Mexico has one particular factor which does not appear in the social system of the United States, for instance. It works to lift every individual who is above the average completely out of his group, and thus, by his advancement, to rob

the lower and middle classes of the vitality and intelligence which make the middle classes of the United States, for instance, so vivid a factor in the national life.

So far, Mexico has failed to create a true middle class. This has been partially due to the continuous upsetting of the settled régimes which are indispensable to such a development. Fundamentally, however, it goes back to the operation of the social ladder, which has raised every mind of intelligence or even of keenness immediately out of its own class and into some branch of the aristocracy. In times of revolution such men become predatory generals, officious bureaucrats, or new hacendados. In normal periods, the social ladder operates to drain the best blood out of the lower and middle classes to the ranks of lawyers, doctors, politicians and priests of the Church. The drain up the social ladder is continuous, and revolutions seem only to accentuate the process, never to change it.

The age-long dependence on aristocracy which is so characteristic of the Mexican mind and of Mexican history again works to pull every possible leader out of his environment and into the ranks of government. It is the very power of this suction that makes the intellectual level of Mexican leaders so low; they are drawn upward by yawning opportunity long before they have developed their meager powers to the standards which civilization demands of the leaders of any people. The result is the tragic picture of Mexican life and government dominated by individuals unequipped in every way

save in personal force to cope with their problems. Their continuous failure and their equally continuous inability to grasp the reasons for their failure only emphasize our great primary thesis that the supreme responsibility for action and the ghastly failure in action of the Mexican national group rest on the shoulders of those who occupy positions of power.

In whatever way we start on the Mexican problem, by way of the individual or by way of the race or the class group, or through the will organizations of the more general type, we inevitably reach this point, whether we will or no. In the individual, the need is for education, and education must inevitably come through those who are equipped to teach and have the executive energy to organize. In the race and class groups we find, despite our desire to wander far afield into the byways of autonomous, self-sufficient, organization, that we come back again to the responsibility of the upper classes, of those who have the power and the will to control and to lead. In the will organizations we reach this end once more, through subtler reasonings and perforce by more careful analysis.

The Mexican prefers to work in groups, and in groups he finds his greatest success. He lives in towns and not in isolated farms; he works in groups in the fields and not alone; if he finds that part of the group is put at special work, his crude ideas of communistic effort inspire him to rebel and even to strike against separation or favoritism. If he is offered, in the group, extra pay for better work, he

will strike for "better pay for equal work", a principle not instilled from without, but part of the inbred communism of centuries.

Yet always in such group organization the typical Mexican seeks to attach himself to a master, to some sort of chieftain on whom he can rely in crises. The strongest practical unit in Mexico is the household, the kin organization, and included in it the entire army of servants which a Mexican household requires. Instinctively the peon is not a drifter, moving from one job to another, but prefers to work and stay in one family for generations. All this is patriarchy, and it goes to the very heart of the group and individual life of Mexico. By the test of the feminine attitude—and that is likely to be the clearest expression of the group idea—this goes so far into the ideas of the crowd that it leaves the seeker after a purely philosophical answer to the Mexican uprisings without a way to turn. During one of the violent outbreaks following the radical propaganda in the State of Morelos, the men workers on a certain hacienda were making speeches and howling with approbation (with inevitable crowd stampede) for those who told them that the deepest desire of their hearts was for land, land, land. But in the outskirts of the crowd were half a dozen peon women, with their husbands in tow, grumbling audibly to their enthusiastic spouses: "Fool, thou; what we want is not land but a good master and regular work to keep thee busy."

Scientifically, the basis for the extraordinary dependence of the Mexican on his aristocracy (using

the term in the sense of the true élite) lies in the very likeness of the race material which makes up the nation. All careful students of the Mexican people, whether native or foreign, recognize the homogeneity in the broadly distributed caste groupings and in the nation as a whole—a homogeneity which the more superficial observer utterly loses in his appreciative notice of the distinctions of classes and communities and tribes.[1] This homogeneity is everywhere evident, so that a Mexican, whether he be creole or Indian, or any of the gradations between, has a method of thought and an attitude toward the problems of his people which is often surprisingly unified. For this reason, the ideas which sweep over Mexico, the sudden stampede to this or that system of government, or plan of procedure, seem to come from what to us who look on from without is a most inadequate stimulus. The last word in the philosophy of group psychology confirms us:

> It takes a stronger stimulation to obtain like reactions from individuals of different color-races or of different ethnic stocks of the same color-race than it does to obtain like reactions from individuals of the same stock or race.[2]

Here, then, is the opportunity, in this power of homogeneity, for the higher types of Mexicans to raise and to uplift those of the lower ranks of intelligence. The same great authority just quoted,

[1] *Cf.* "The People of Mexico," Book I, Chapter II, pages 14 *et seq.*

[2] F. H. Giddings, "Pluralistic Behavior," *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1920, Volume XXV, page 392.

Professor Giddings, expresses the "law of concerted volition" in these terms:

> The percentage number of individuals participating in a collective decision diminishes as the intellectual quality of the decision rises.[1]

Thus the hope of Mexico must, by the very laws of psychology, be placed in the hands of those few who are capable of making the higher decisions, and who, by their blood and training, are able to bring the executive force to finishing it.

Mexico's chaos is not due to her lack of what the psychologists call "like-mindedness", but to her existence on those lower planes of desires which have, as yet, barely lifted her above the level of the beasts on to the ecogenetic plane. Just because she is like-minded, she will, if lifted with understanding and taught with genuine devotion, move along the road of true advancement and true service to her own great place in the world. The differences between the upper and the lowest classes are immaterial. The brother who lives and thinks on the higher plane (although it be but a little higher) is willing and anxious—and now knows how—to stoop and to uplift.

[1] F. H. Giddings, "Pluralistic Behavior," *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1920, Volume XXV, page 398.

CHAPTER X

THE CAULDRON OF POLITICS

THE sorriest pictures in the whole gallery of Mexican group behavior are those of the nation's political history. From the "*Grito de Dolores*", the rallying cry of the first uprising against Spain on September 16, 1810, to the latest opera-bouffe "revolution" of yesterday, the record is drab with ugly personalities and hideous with unspeakable crimes. Here and there only in the long panorama are peaks which seem to mark moments of devotion and idealism; but even these shrink, under observation, toward the ugly level of the rest.

No more caustic critics of Mexican political life can be found than the wiser and saner Mexican students of their own people. One of these[1] has described the great fundamental evil in these words:

[1] Toribio Esquivel Obregon, "La Influencia de España y los Estados Unidos Sobre México," *Casa Editorial Calleja*, Madrid, 1918, page 98. For the examples in this chapter and elsewhere in this book the author is in deep debt to this great scholar. The book from which this quotation is taken is the most illuminating comparison of political conditions in Mexico and the United States that has been printed in any language. It is based on Lord Bryce's "The American Commonwealth," with Doctor Esquivel Obregon's own interpretation of Mexico's governmental system.

THE MEXICAN MIND

The history of Mexico does not present a single case of adjustment to principle and to social interest; it presents an infinitude of personal compromises.

The very foundations of the Mexican political system are personal. The search in Mexican crises is not for a principle, but for a man to lead, and the names of the movements which take the place of political parties are formed of the names of the men who lead them; the supporters of Porfirio Diaz were ever the "Profiristas", never a true party name or a coalition of parties; and so down the line to to-day, Maderistas, Carrancistas, Obregonistas. Save only when the division was based on the religious classification were there real parties, Conservatives and Liberals,—but to-day all "parties" are subdivisions of the Liberals, all personal even when masquerading under special but temporary titles.

Aside from the personalities supported, there is literally no difference in aims, or in promises. Mexican politics does not divide itself on questions of policy, and all who are interested in Mexican political movements seek to discover the personal ideas of the candidates, never the spirit of the community. For the candidate chosen will be elected on his popularity or power or on the support he gets from the strongest faction (usually the faction in power). On this, Doctor Esquivel Obregon speaks with distressing frankness:

Reading the programs(or platforms) of the political parties, Mexico would appear to be a country where all is harmony and peace, because substantially there are no differences in

aspirations; only it is customary to have variations in details. . . . The motives which attract public opinion to a candidate are not his moral or intellectual qualities but the probability of his triumph on account of the support on which he can count.[1]

It is this so-called "personalism" in politics which has been the bane of Mexican government throughout the whole history of the independence. It saturates Mexico and gives the outside world good reason indeed for its belief that the only hope of Mexico is in the control of its government by a man who will use the "iron hand."

This tradition, which had its origin in Mexico itself, is so deeply rooted that only an appreciation of Mexican psychology will make it possible for us to vary the conception. The facts of Mexican history demonstrate the action of that psychology, and it is worthy of note that so far back as the beginning of the Spanish régime, and throughout the three hundred years of Spanish rule, the only failures in government were in times when the mailed fist was used with unthinking force upon the natives and the native-born mixed and white bloods.

The Mexican is ever a follower of leaders rather than of ideas, but those leaders, while they must be strong, must on the other hand lead, rather than drive. The great example, in our usual way of thinking of Mexico, is our regarding the success of Diaz as due to his strong hand over

[1] Toribio Esquivel Obregon, "La Influencia de España y los Estados Unidos Sobre México," page 126.

the government. In reality his strength came from the wisdom with which, in the very beginning of his rule, he brought all elements to compromise and used his force, not to control his supporters, but to destroy only the open enemies of the country. We can look back on the factors which brought about his fall,—the sudden cruelties of his murder of the striking workmen in the Orizaba cotton mills, his forcing on the country an unpopular man for vice-president, and his forgetting, in his old age, his traditionally friendly and benevolent interest in the affairs of the common people. It seems indeed that his political death came chiefly through his too heavy use of his power and the abuses which his officials perpetrated in the name of the "Iron Hand of Diaz."

At the root of this theory of personalism and the need of the iron hand (shared alike, remember, by the Mexican and the foreign observer) is the astonishing political history of Mexico. A brief explanation is necessary to any understanding of the complicated psychology of Mexican politics.

The most colossal and disastrous effect of that imitative faculty which has come down through Indian time and persists so forcibly in the Mexican of to-day has appeared in the succeeding systems of government. From the time of the early invasions of the conquering Nahua tribes[1] when their methods of rule, their gods and their kings were forced upon the conquered peoples age after age,

[1] *Cf.* "The People of Mexico," Book I, chapter I, for an outline of the Indian history of Mexico.

down to the phenomenon of the spread of European socialism among the Mexicans of to-day, Mexico has ever been a borrower of government and political systems from outside herself. In all that long history of more than two thousand years, we look in vain for even a spark of desire for or the slightest attempt to apply the people's own remedies to their own political ills.

Passing over the Indian invasions and their complete upturning of social, political and religious systems at frequent intervals, we come to the glowing example of Spain, which in her three centuries of rule forced down upon the Indians the government and the religion as well as the language of the Iberian conquerors. The success of the religion, at least, was proof of but one thing, and that was not the all-conquering universality of the Church of Rome, but rather the docility and adaptability of the Indians. The whole system of the laws and usages of Mexico, as we have seen above, came from outside herself, direct and practically unchanged from the Spanish provinces. This Spanish system lasted for so long and was so thoroughly enforced that it seems indeed as if it had become part and parcel of the very life of the country. It persisted through many revolutions and through the peace of Diaz, but as we look back on it in the light of the reversion to Indianism which seems to be gripping the country in recent years, we have a new realization of the instability of the Spanish as well as of all the later grafts upon the parent stem of Indianism.

For the grafting did not end with the fall of Spanish rule. Almost at once there began a new borrowing of ideas. The uprising of the Indians under Hidalgo in 1810 was rather against all the whites than merely against Spain. But Indian incompetence let the banner fall from its loose grip, and it was not until 1823 that the real independence was achieved. And by what and by whom? By the spirit of the "Rights of Man", borrowed from France and the United States and carried by the native-born whites or creoles of Mexico. Like the native-born whites of the present United States, they decided that they, too, were as good as the Europeans, and so wrote their Declaration of Independence. Borrowed, all of it, a rebellion steeped in the blood of the white men and not in the soil of Mexico.

But their "rights of man" were short-lived, and soon they were inviting Ferdinand VII of Spain to rule over Mexico, in his exile from Madrid. The royal idea was thus implanted, and a Mexican creole, Agustin Iturbide, crowned himself emperor. Afterward the republic again, and with it, after many vicissitudes, a new constitution, borrowed, practically complete, from the constitution of the new United States of America. Mexico, whose hope was in her entity, formed herself into a federal republic, with sovereign States—where no States had existed—because, forsooth, the United States was making a fine go of it, and success is contagious. Sight was lost entirely of the fact that the Federal republic of the United States was the result of the

only possible form of union that could be devised between thirteen rebelling colonies, each of which had been almost as distinct, governmentally, as were Mexico and Cuba and Florida and Peru, the independent Spanish colonies.

Briefly, once more, the sequence of the republican borrowing was halted, while Maximilian, brought from Austria to save Mexico for the Conservatives, appeared with his borrowed European court and his shiploads of silver plate and royal carriages, to rule as Mexico's second emperor. On his death the republican system resumed its interrupted way,—empires were not successful, and therefore not worth imitating.

Along with Mexico's imitation of the federal form of government went a dozen other imitations of the American constitution. All of these have had but one net result in Mexican history since the adoption of the Constitution of 1857,—the living of a political lie, for Mexico has never, since that day, lived up to more than the most casual literalness of that document. She has been governed, whenever she had peace, by a despot sitting in the central power and appointing the supposedly elective governors and all their staffs. She has been judged, when she has had justice, by a despot dictating the major principles of law and such detailed decisions as were of national or political importance. She has had elections with "free and unlimited suffrage" which have been hopeless farces, as they must inevitably be in a population whose illiteracy is, by the best estimates, at least ninety per cent.

peaceful and progressive and helpful to the unfortunate of the land. Never, moreover, has it earnestly sought to achieve that high place in the eyes of the world to which the Mexicans lay such elaborate claim.

The result has been and is to-day this disparity between the written constitution and the true characteristics of the Mexican people. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Mexico has sought to appear before the world as a "democratic" nation. Yet in all that period there has probably been not one government which has actually been so, with the possible exception of that of Madero at the very beginning of its brief life, a condition which can be credited largely to the fact that it was then using the inherited political machinery of Diaz, directed toward democratic ends.

Up to the time of Diaz there had been seventy-two governments since the first rebellion against Spain, and virtually all these had been merely *de facto* organizations controling sections of the country; only twelve had legal recognition, and the others were, as a Mexican revolutionist has remarked, "grotesque tyrannies and shameless usurpations." During the hundred years of independence there have been about eight hundred revolutions, but only three of them have been national in their scope,—that begun by Hidalgo; that of Juarez, and that of Madero.

Yet revolution has been the great manifestation of political activity in Mexico. This is unquestionable, for in all her history no political party or

faction has come to power by any means but revolution. Whenever there has been change of government by election, it has been because it was desirable, in the eyes of those in control, to put some one else in office,—the great example is of course the four years "interregnum" of Gonzales between Diaz's first and second terms.

Indeed this custom of revolution as a political activity also has its roots in the imitation of foreign forms. It is literally true that from the pre-Diaz revolutions down to those of the recent past, the justification offered for the excesses and the horrors which have accompanied them (and for their very existence, in fact) has been the French Revolution. The defenders of the Carranza movement, for example, echo their masters of a generation before in that "no social progress has ever been achieved save by revolution." They forget, as the student quoted above[1] has expressed it, that the French Revolution was to establish rights given long before and not to overturn a system, that no progress was achieved by the French Revolution, but only in the periods of peace which finally succeeded it. He says later that, in seeking to achieve institutions similar to, or greater than those of the United States, Mexico has "spilt more blood than the sweat which would have served to cultivate her most fertile lands; and in order to have the satisfaction of imitating the French Revolution and of saying that there is being realized in this country the most advanced theories of contemporary

[1] Toribio Esquivel Obregon, *op. cit.*, pages 110, 113.

socialism, the whole people has been cast into torment and reduced to misery."

Posing under the shadow of the forms of democracy, Mexico has carried on her politics without even the salutary influence of a strong opposition party. Always a faction has been in full control not only of the machinery of government but of the machinery of "election", and death has been the penalty of the opposition which in genuinely democratic lands would have either disappeared into quiet and decent retirement or survived in thoroughly healthy attacks on the successful government. Even in the period of revolution prior to Diaz, when Conservatives and Liberals switched places with bewildering frequency (but always as a result of revolution), there was no true political life, for each was either completely in power or completely out of power, and the "opposition" existed only in hunted armies of "bandits."

A more recent example brings the situation close to us. After Madero had established his government, a promising opposition apparently arose in the Catholic party in Congress, but this party was so suddenly and completely destroyed through the machinations of Gustavo Madero that its single attempt at a safe and sane opposition was completely quashed. When Francisco de la Barra, former *ad interim* president of the republic and the recognized leader of the Catholic party, was about to return from Paris to Mexico in 1912, he received a cablegram from the "Circle of Friends of Francisco Madero" warning him that if he came to

Mexico to establish himself, as he planned, as a leader of the Catholic opposition party in Congress, he would do so "at his own peril and at the peril of the Mexican nation." De la Barra had no intention of attempting in any way to organize a revolution, and it is doubtful if he then had any ambitions for the presidency, but his plan to organize the Catholic party as a healthy opposition to the government was regarded in Mexico as at its mildest a tentative attempt to "discredit" the Madero régime.[1]

As this is written, the government of Obregon, tottering in its niche, has no true opposition in Congress or in the political life of the country. Those who oppose him are regarded darkly as traitors by his supporters and as patriots by his enemies. This is the case whether the opposition be from congressmen, whose lives are at stake (as the assassination of the opposition by Huerta amply proved), or from political opponents who wait on the border to form armies to overthrow him or who are even now in the field against him. It is a condition frankly recognized by the Mexicans, and no one thinks, to-day, of upsetting Obregon's policies save by threat of revolution or by the pressure of possible foreign intervention.

All of which tends to demonstrate only the utter inability of the Mexican mind to function in a

[1] The author was in Paris at the time, was in the apartments of Mr. de la Barra in the Hotel Regina when the cablegram was received, and listened to the discussion which finally resulted in Mr. de la Barra's returning to Mexico by way of Washington.

democracy. The very system of State divisions in Mexico (now long enough established to have become an accepted fact of the national life) has had, as its primary result, the simplification of the system of revolutions as political expedients. A governor or a local celebrity can more easily work his will in a recognized political area like a State than in a unified nation. The fact that Mexican revolutions invariably start in single States, and that the present government is, as we have seen, virtually a confederation of tribal chieftains, makes the State system a continued invitation to national suicide. The Mexicans themselves trace the loss of Texas to the false idea of State entities and this was certainly a contributing factor to the secession. But the most interesting corollary is that when a tribal chieftain reaches the supreme power, as Obregon has reached it and as Diaz reached it before him, his first and his lasting effort is to destroy, in actuality, the sense of separateness which gave him his first opportunity and which he knows well will give another opportunity to a later rival. But none, not even Carranza in his new constitution, dared eliminate the federal system,—it means too much to the *caciques* or chieftains to whom, in the last analysis, the ruler must look for support.

The ability of the Mexican to assimilate democracy was discussed by Madero in his famous book on the "Presidential Succession", where he wrote that "while it is perhaps true that eighty-four per cent. of the people are handled at will by the government and the Clergy", his observation of

the meetings held in Nuevo Leon, Yucatan and Coahuila proved that "our people are generally inclined to follow those who are more to their liking." The tragedy with which Madero was betrayed was a ghastly awakening to any who shared his belief in the ability of the eighty-four per cent. of Mexico to enjoy democracy.

Here, however, we touch a deeper phase of the problem, the utter unreliability of the Mexican in facing his political obligations. The fact that he elected Madero and then went back to his fields and forgot about him; that in the next turn of events he agreed to fight for another leader who promised him everything that Madero had not yet given him are the truest indications of the Mexican attitude toward politics as a personal game where there is all privilege and no obligation.

This apathy is the accumulated result of years of misunderstanding and tyranny, and only years of appreciation and education can eradicate it. The régime which marked the Spanish time with the Church, the nobles, and the landholders as virtually kings in their realms made of the Indian a cautious soul to whom the power of his masters was so omnipresent that he learned to look only to the hand that fed him and seldom beyond it. Thus, when anyone asks the Indian who is the President of Mexico, he replies, "*Quien sabe?*" or will even repeat the name of the president of his little village.

Only one power in Mexico seems capable, time after time, of rousing the Indian out of his apathy,—politically as well as religiously. This power is the

Roman Catholic Church. The virility and ability of recovery of the Catholic Church needs no comment here, but it is perhaps of value to suggest the chief local reason for its permanence under persecution in Mexico and to cite examples of its very virile strength in the political life of the country. Throughout all the periods of Mexican revolution it has been the Church, and the Church often absolutely alone, which has kept the fires of national conservative patriotism burning; and stable Mexicans, even though not Catholics, have always turned to it as the first and the last sure control of the passions of the populace.

The power of the Church may therefore be said never to have been truly eclipsed. Two or three instances since Diaz seem to substantiate this. After Madero's accession the returns of "the first free election Mexico ever had" undoubtedly showed a vast number of Catholic candidates chosen for congress and other offices,—a choice which was promptly vitiated by official action. Toward the end of his rule Carranza was frankly fearful of the political power of the Church, and the steady developments of Mexican politics since that time indicate a growing power of the Catholic element (whether directed by the hierarchy or not is unimportant) as a possible stabilizing factor in Mexican politics. These conditions are of themselves significant of the recognition by the politicians of the power which the Church, directly or indirectly, exercises over the vast body of ignorant population existing in Mexico. The Catholics have always con-

tended that in the larger sense this churchly influence was for good, even though in details it might seem selfish and shortsighted. This carries us again into the larger question of the nature of politics in Mexico, where the unthinking mass must always be led either by the Church or by the demagogues; the point of much discussion being whether the priest, the politician or the soldier is the better guide.

The pity of it is that, needing this leadership so badly, the Mexican is forced, by the very conditions of his history and of his psychology, into taking always the worst leaders, seeking out always the poorest guides and the most heartless exploiters of all that means anything to his body or his soul. This is the tragedy of group life everywhere, but in Mexico the tragedy reaches the proportions of a holocaust. In Mexico there are almost no public men. There are orators and lawyers and philosophers, but the much berated yet thoroughly useful politician does not exist. There is no opportunity, no scheme of reward for the "district workers", for those simple and industrious leaders of the mass who make Anglo-Saxon politics at once the most human and the most workable of democratic instruments. Nothing brings Mexican politics "down to earth", and it sails in a heaven of priestly exhortations or idealistic oratory, or wallows in the blood and mire of revolution and graft; there is nothing between. Hear the plea, for Mexican politics and the Mexican people, of one who burns with the intense honesty of his purpose:

We live in complete delirium, the work of the unhealthy literature which devastates our brains and the seclusion in which we are held forever, far from the political realities. To the world we seem criminals; but we are not, for we are only a poor organism obsessed by the most cruel suffering, racked by the blackest of nightmares, stripped of wisdom and stripped of power to control the convulsions of its malady; but dreaming, in its nakedness and impotence, of reaching the summit of humanity, of realizing the as yet unrealized dream of human equality, of setting the world aright. But if we are fortunate, the day will come when the calamity which fate brings to all dreamers will bring us the cure, which at rare times is the end of delirium; then it will appear that our soul is formed of the same wings as that of Alfonso Quijano the Good.[1]

A hope, indeed, and perhaps a true one. But behind the hope, and wrapped up inexorably with its development, is the basic conception of the attitude toward the State and the government. This, in all the turbulence of its manifestations, must after all be the basis of both political thinking and group morality. The unanimity of the Mexican group-mind is nowhere more patent. Individualistic as the Mexican is in every class, he regards the law as something devised as a protection for himself at the same time that he regards himself as above the law. Mexican justice in the administration of laws is not the cold, impersonal force which we of Anglo-Saxon mind have come to believe is the only form which justice can take. The lawyer before the Mexican court seeks the friendship of the judge and discusses the case with him personally. The judge in his turn promises that "justice

[1] Toribio Esquivel Obregon, *op cit.*, page 121.

will be done", and that justice is actually done in thousands of cases is testified over and over again by all who dealt with Mexican courts in the days of Diaz. This has nothing to do with any graft or bribery in the judicial function. The notorious fact that the courts were under the domination of the executive, even in the time of Diaz, did not mean that they were corruptible; it merely meant what Diaz himself stated,—that the "higher justice" which hung upon no evidence and could not be defined in court could be executed best from the sanctum of the dictator. The "dishonest" courts of Mexican were at that time a manifestation not of bribes but a state of mind of the Mexican himself.

Honesty and justice are relative matters. Courts of absolute justice in Mexico would not only be startling to the natives, but would probably be considered cruel and heartless beyond belief, although Mexicans do recognize the possibility of an abstract justice beyond what has been dispensed by Mexican courts since Diaz departed. The Mexicans have a growing respect for American and English law and enforcement of law, but although they voice a hope that some day Mexico may furnish similar justice, it is doubtful if its impersonal application would be immediately popular.

The Mexican will have to travel a long way before he will reach the point where he can understand an American or English judge deciding against a personal friend in a mere matter of judicial interpretation. The average Mexican, for instance, will

find nothing out of the ordinary in the incident cited by Doctor Esquivel Obregon, where when three cases against three different individuals came up for decision, on identical evidence (for the matter all dealt with a single incident) the Supreme Court of the nation decided one of the cases unanimously for the plaintiff, the second unanimously for the defendant, and the third for the plaintiff by a majority vote,—and the briefs were identical, save for the difference in the names of the defendants. [1]

The attitude of the office-holder is a most illuminating phase of the Mexican relationship to the State. Gustave Le Bon wrote that "in general and fundamentally the political problem of the Latin-American demoracies is the problem of public thieving." In this is summed up the essence of the Mexican attitude toward political office, itself an unanswerable charge against Mexican "democracy." A Mexican official seldom considers a public office as a public trust. A prosperous class of citizens has been built up in the lesser bureaucrats upon the tacit understanding that the public office can be used as an opportunity to steal and to graft. The "milking" of public office and of those who must deal with such an office has long been an art in Mexico, and before and since Diaz has been the most flagrant of government abuses. Under the Porfirian régime it also existed, but was of a thoroughly "legitimate" order. A lawyer, for instance, would give a present of twenty pesos to an em-

[1] Toribio Esquivel Obregon, *op cit.*, page 185.

ployee of a department to place papers in which the lawyer was interested at the top of the pile of matter which was to come to the minister's attention. This payment would not be considered by either the clerk or the lawyer as any form of graft. The giving of commissions to purchasing agents and influential persons by dealers in Mexico was common during the Diaz régime, and is of course to-day abused beyond all description. Yet efforts to bribe high Mexican officials would almost invariably (under Diaz) be the source of immense discomfiture for those who attempted it.

Petty grafting by minor officials has been common in Mexico through her entire history. It is recorded that when the Mexican Railway was constructed in the 70's, labor was contracted from the mayor of a village, who was paid seventy-five centavos a day, per man. To the men whom he furnished he paid but thirty-seven and one-half centavos a day, pocketing the balance, but when the workmen were informed of this and were told that they could receive the full pay by being employed directly, they preferred to continue under the protection of their chief.

Graft as a perquisite of position is thus a fundamental tenet of Mexican psychology. The distinction between opportunity in personal affairs and in public office is, however, fairly sharp. A Mexican may be above taking graft in private business, but a government position is to him distinctly an opportunity for thievery from the government and from those who deal with govern-

ment and is embraced as such and no questions asked.

Group morality, in such cases, is distinctly below the average of private morality, as we have seen. There is widespread graft in Mexico to-day, but chiefly it has to do with government, and where the very lifeblood of the government is to-day poured almost openly into the waiting cups of those in power, private morality, in business and in individual relationships, is still relatively good. The astonishing facts of Mexican government graft hardly enter into the present discussion, but the cycle of the past twelve years is not without its very great significance on the psychological side. Under General Diaz, some graft was paid, as has been noted, but to-day the collection of toll for every act and the extraction of commissions, in cash or in kind, and with or without the knowledge of the payer and with or without any return to him, absolutely engulfs the country.

The peace of Obregon during the first months of his office—that peace which so reassured the world outside—was bought at a price of millions of pesos paid in outright tribute to Villa and men of his type. The government of Carranza, before Obregon, existed solely on the strength of his willingness to let his generals take what they would, and the padded pay rolls of the army (a minor form of graft even in the time of Diaz) were the laughing-stock of the ever-ready wits of the Mexican capital. It was said, and probably with truth, that Carranza fell because his presentation of a civilian candidate

for president was taken by his generals as an indication that he intended to divert some of the graft to unmilitary channels.

The pity of it all is that perhaps Carranza—perhaps also Obregon—followed these tactics with a sincere desire to do the best thing for their country and for their people. Steeped in immorality, with the breaking of public faith the chief tenet of the political creed, with loot as the end of nine-tenths of the "revolutionary" outbreaks which are Mexican "politics", the whole panorama of Mexican group life is marked with the hideous taint of outraged public trust. No wonder the cry goes up from all who look closely at Mexican questions: How can we hope to see a rebirth of personal morality in a people who for almost the whole of one of their brief generations have seen in their leaders and in their natural teachers the most colossal outraging of all the principles of morality and race advancement?

The only hope seems to be in looking at the past, and that hope is still dim. Diaz lifted his country and his people a little way out of a slough that was similar, in essence, to this present wallow of savage passion. Is there another Diaz, or is there indeed a newer era dawning when the group can look within and to its lesser leaders, when Mexico's cry through all the years shall be for a principle, and not for a man?

CHAPTER XI

MEXICO AND THE WORLD WITHOUT

FOR nearly all the hundred years of their independence, the Mexicans have regarded subjugation to the United States as their country's ultimate destiny. Whatever may be our own ideas about the matter, however preposterous the idea may be to many of us, or however desirable, indeed, it may seem to others, the fact remains that this is the unqualified Mexican conviction. They ground it upon the history of American relations with their country and upon their belief that the destiny of the United States itself is driving it, whether its individual citizens will it or not, toward such an end.

The whole attitude of Mexico and the Mexicans toward foreigners is colored and confused by two vital psychological facts. One is this group-fear of foreign intervention, which is at the basis alike of all the good behavior of Mexican governments and of all their bombastic and embarrassing assertions of "national pride." The other is the Mexican's individual appreciation of the personal qualities of foreigners and the shrewd realization that under foreigners they and their country have the greatest opportunity for prosperity and advancement. Today the group-fear is uppermost and dominates the

individual attitude; but the friendly feeling still exists deep in the Mexican mind. This takes from the temporary manifestations of the present much of their menace and promises much good in the future, not only for foreigners but for Mexico's own people as well.

The fear of foreign interference in Mexican affairs goes through all the country's history. The Mexican-American war of 1847–1849, with its loss to Mexico of its fairest provinces—the great empire of Texas, the precious fields and mountains of Arizona, New Mexico and California—has never been forgotten. The smoldering grudge over those losses was easily fanned to flame in the popular mind by Carranza's skillful anti-American propaganda during the Great War of 1914–19.

Besides this actual invasion of Mexican territory, with its tragic losses to Mexico, the United States has been very close to intervention in Mexican affairs at least four times in the independent history of that country. The question of claims, which gave the Texans, indeed, their first excuse to comply with American requests and on this ground (among others) to secede from Mexico, almost brought on a war previous to that of 1847. The Treaty of Guadalupe which ended the Mexican-American war settled that moot point only by providing that the United States should take over the payment of the balance of the claims of American citizens for border raids, Mexico having paid only a tenth of the two million dollars which the claims commissions of 1840 had allowed.

Perhaps as near an approach to actual American intervention in the private political affairs of Mexico as ever failed to materialize came just at the close of the American Civil War in 1865. When Lee surrendered at Appomattox, the Union had a trained army of close to half a million veterans, the greatest body of fighting men in the world. For two years the French had been supporting with money and with an army the puppet of Napoleon III in Mexico, the Emperor Maximilian. After the fall of the Confederacy, Washington, ready to consider the Mexican situation, as it had not been before, demanded the withdrawal of the French troops.

Napoleon III retired his armies from Mexico immediately following the collapse of the Confederacy in the United States, but Maximilian continued to rule, supported by some Mexicans and a horde of mercenaries and adventurers. From Texas a handful of Confederate soldiers crossed into Mexico, vowing they would never lay down their arms. They offered their trained swords to Maximilian, and fought for two years for him. They presented themselves as the vanguard of another army, second only to that of the United States, the army of the Confederacy. Had Napoleon chosen to allow Maximilian more "mercenaries", or had the continuance of the empire and Mexican civil war seemed possible with the means at Maximilian's disposal, the United States would have been forced to throw its armies across the border. General Kirby-Smith, the great Con-

federate cavalry officer, was in Texas and Louisiana, ready to lead the Confederate hosts into Mexico and to fight the American Civil War over again on Mexican soil. Juarez was then, as Carranza was nearly fifty years later, the pet of Washington, and the Mexicans feared then as now that intervention meant annexation. Napoleon's withdrawal first, and Maximilian's financial inability to handle the Confederate hosts which waited for his word saved Mexico at that time from the action which the imperialists and the republicans feared equally.

The next occasion when American intervention was imminent was during Grant's administration. Juarez, after his term in the presidency, was dead, and Diaz, who now was in the saddle, seemed only a bandit Indian chieftain, with Mexico seething around him in an endless series of civil wars and "revolutions" of which the present era is an almost exact replica. American rights (chiefly along the border) were being trampled upon in the again familiar fashion, and the question of intervention was considered seriously in Washington. The discussion took in every phase of the problem, including its difficulties and obligations, with an eye on a people in the United States who were sick of war, but were led by a cabinet and statesmen nearly all of whom had been soldiers. The result was a virtual decision to move forward, if that were necessary, and the notes which were forwarded to Diaz were backed—and bore the stamp of it in their language—by this firm decision. Only Diaz's

personal success and the establishment of his substantial government solved the question without outside interference. The documents relating to this remarkable situation are in the archives in Washington. They show how the very willingness to proceed with intervention was then (as it has been ever since) the surest and shortest road to the avoidance of the need of intervention.

A few years later, under President Hayes, the famous Evarts note to Diaz, while it probably did not presage actual intervention, was couched in terms which hinted at the likelihood that the United States would take a hand in Mexican affairs if necessary,—and the peace of Diaz was definitely founded upon the dictator's wise use of this document as the basis of his "phantom of American intervention."

The incidents of the Wilson administration in Washington are more recent. The Pershing expedition into northern Mexico to capture Villa after the raid on Columbus, New Mexico, in 1916, merely verged on intervention, but the occupation of Vera Cruz in 1914 was literally the first step in such an invasion. This move was clothed in terms of an attack on a single man, President Huerta, but it confirmed to the Mexican mind once more the conviction that the United States leaned always to the idea of intervention and was then restrained only by fear, either of Mexico's own national prowess, or of the international consequences. A week after the withdrawal of the American troops from Vera Cruz the talk of intervention was

stronger in Washington than it had been during the occupation, and the actual move was held off more because President Wilson viewed all war with horror than because the situation did not justify action. The refusal then to be willing, as Grant was willing, to intervene if conditions did not improve is apparently at the root of the unrest and the difficulties which have followed.

The Wilson intervention policy was largely one of drifting, carrying with it little of the force which direct threats had had in the earlier administrations. Under his predecessors, an imminence of intervention had such a profound psychological effect on the Mexicans as to remove, almost forthwith, the causes for American action; under Wilson the American government displayed a weakness, a negative attitude toward Mexico, which convinced the Mexicans that intervention could be avoided by merely bluffing it off. It shaped their foreign policy indeed, but it shaped it away from the old system of prompt compliance and toward the deliberate adoption of innuendo and insult as the means of escape. It changed their concept of the United States from that of the mastiff which had formerly held undisputed sway into that of an equally massive canine whose teeth—and insides—were one or both missing.

In either form, however, the idea of American intervention has had a profound psychological influence on Mexican diplomacy and indeed on Mexican internal politics. The "phantom of intervention" was said, in the time of Diaz, to be a

figment of the imagination of that ruler. It was whispered in Mexico—and the ordinary Mexicans believed it to a man—that Diaz held his place because he bowed so willingly to American ideas and at the same time fostered throughout Mexico the idea that intervention was sure to follow his overthrow. To-day one hears this theory everywhere, when Diaz is discussed, and many of his old supporters hold that Diaz himself so believed in the "specter" that he fled from his country and gave it over to the Madero revolution because he believed that if he fought for his place, his action would inevitably bring on American invasion and destruction to Mexico.

Indeed, the ideas of American "destiny" and predatory intent toward Mexico were to be found throughout the circles of government in those days, just as they are to-day. Those astute aristocrats of the Diaz time had figured out elaborately, and to their own satisfaction, the history of "imperialism" of the United States. They knew the why of all the expansions of their northern neighbor and explained them all in terms of predatory nationalism,—which was ultimately to take in Mexico along with Louisiana, Oregon, Texas, California, New Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii, the Philippines and Porto Rico.

Fifteen years ago there died in Mexico City a little old man, with long black hair and a white mustache and imperial. His name was Ignacio Mariscal. He was Minister of Foreign Affairs under President Diaz. With him perhaps died Diaz,

for not only had the counsel of Ignacio Mariscal helped to keep Diaz close to the source of his power, the simple peons who worshipped him and who could always see the president and discuss with him their complaints against his predatory underlings, but it had kept Diaz clear, too, in his vision toward the outside world. Mariscal, of pure Spanish descent, but for generations a Mexican, knew that outside world as well as he knew Mexico. His administration of the foreign office has been criticized as "easy" on the ground that he merely "did what Washington told him to do", but it is interesting to compare the facts and to realize that it was abroad and not in Mexico that Finance Minister Limantour funded the old Mexican debt, paid it and floated Mexican government bonds on a four-per-cent. basis. It was from abroad that the capital which developed Mexico into a modern State poured in. And Mariscal controlled Mexico's foreign policy. His recipe may have been simple, but it was successful.

The Mariscal policy was based primarily on this same principle of American intervention. Mariscal may not have believed that any American government or any generation of the American people desired or dreamed of intervention, but he certainly believed that the frank fear of it and respect for the United States should be and were the bases of the foreign policy of Mexico. It may well be that knowing his people as he did he realized the psychological effect of the fear of that intervention. He himself was not without a firm belief in some

phases of it, chiefly the American destiny which Mexicans feel will some day bring their country under the shadow of the Stars and Strips. One story of that belief will suffice.

On the second of May, 1898, Mariscal was walking, as he did every morning, in the beautiful Alameda of Mexico City. A friend, the editor of an American newspaper in Mexico City, greeted him. The news of Dewey's victory in Manila Bay was on every tongue, and discussion was inevitable. Soon Mariscal said very quietly that of course the United States would annex the Philippines. The protest from the American was vehement,—most Americans in Mexico in that time were kept busy disclaiming the Mexican accusations of their nation's predatory designs on Cuba.

"Ah, yes," Mariscal interrupted him, nodding his head sagely and confidently. "Not Cuba, no. But the Philippines, yes. You shall see."

Then the smile faded and the little black eyes looked off down the shaded gravel path.

"Yes, and we are happy here in Mexico that it has happened so," he concluded. "For now your country will have its hands so busy for many years that it will not have time to think of taking Mexico."

The astute old creole aristocrat spoke sincerely, and the event proved the truth of his prediction as regards the Philippines. But he presented in concrete words on a definite occasion the thought that was then as it is to this day uppermost in the minds of Mexican leaders when they think of the United States.

This concentration of attention on the great northern neighbor brings in another psychological factor of Mexican diplomacy. This is the Monroe Doctrine. Even though they do not like this clearly enunciated policy of the American nation, Mexican governments from the days of President Monroe himself down to the present have hidden themselves behind its protecting wings. For all its distasteful qualities, which make its support something of a bitter pill to the "proud Latin States" of the Western hemisphere, the Monroe Doctrine has resulted in making all Mexican diplomacy in Europe rather a matter of gold braid than of real work. Of late, however, it has had yet another facet.

It is to be remembered that this cornerstone of American diplomacy was enunciated originally as a warning to European powers that any attempt to extend their territorial possessions at the expense of any sovereign State in the Western hemisphere would be considered a threat against the sovereignty of the United States. Its development through various stages reached, before President Wilson's time, to what the Latin-Americans have described as the assumption by the United States of the rôle of "Continental Policeman." Under Carranza the Mexican conviction that the predatory ideals of the United States were demonstrated in this new Monroe Doctrine was cleverly disseminated throughout the Western world, and the "Carranza Doctrine", which held that no foreign State, no matter what its power, had a right to dictate the policies of smaller States, was offered as a counteracting force.

During the Great War Carranza's propaganda was carried on, probably with German money, throughout Latin-America, and the crop of anti-American laws which followed everywhere may be traced largely to it. The success of Carranza in tweaking the eagle's tail and getting away with his life, and with official recognition from Washington into the bargain, added to the popularity of the idea if not of the name of the "Carranza Doctrine." President Wilson's own enunciation of the coming displacement of the Monroe Doctrine with some form of "Pan-Americanism" had its influence as well.

If, under Obregon, that feeling of the Carranza period has been covered with greater tact and displayed with less bombast, this hardly means that it had been forgotten. Mexicans still point significantly to the fact that Cuba has not been allowed to elect its ex-bandits to the presidential chair; that Haiti is forced to spend her income for roads and schools, despite her expressed wish to spend it for the personal aggrandizement of her leaders; and that Nicaragua frets under the "tyrranous" intervention of American marines when she would much prefer to be enjoying her erstwhile revolutions.

Whatever may be the facts of the American attitude or of the American destiny, for that matter, the conviction remains in the Mexican mind, and particularly in the Mexican group-mind, that the eyes of the "Colossus of the North", of the "Blond Octopus", are on their country. The whole weight

of Mexican policy is directed toward the avoidance of intervention. Thus when the threat is definite and the danger presses, there is inevitably prompt compliance with the orders of the "predatory policeman" of the Continent; the behavior of Maximilian and of Diaz were the instinctive Mexican policy. When, on the other hand, the threatening force of the United States is asleep or distracted from the idea which the Mexicans regard as an obsession, the activity of wily Latin-Indian diplomats is directed toward keeping that attention in its state of distraction. Hence all the endless round of subterfuges and hecklings,—Jove is dozing, and if he wakes with his attention on flies, he will not soon think of putting on his armor. So the Mexican reasons, and in such wise we must watch his reasoning, or we, too, will lose sight of the main issue, just as he intends that we shall.

These are the outstanding manifestations of that sense of inferiority which masquerades under the name of Mexican "national pride", proclaiming itself in the childishness of its extreme sensitiveness to its position in the eyes of its accepted superiors. Under Diaz there was a true appearance of manly self-respect and willingness to meet the world on its own terms; since that era, it has become increasingly impossible for any nation in the world to make any diplomatic representations to the Mexican government without this reiterated, childish pride bobbing up in the midst of all discussions. The whole nature of the Mexican revolutions which have followed each other since 1910 has become more

openly anti-foreign. That of Madero was long ago described by an able Mexican[1] as a "Boxer" uprising against the foreigners. This relatively mild upheaval has grown, under Carranza and Obregon (directed by their foreign radical advisers), into an openly hostile government system in which the properties and persons of foreigners are set at the mercy of the executives of Mexico. The hectic efforts to force a "nationalization of the country's resources," directed almost solely against foreign corporations and individuals; the prohibitions against foreigners owning land, either openly in vast zones along the coasts and international borders (where most of the previous foreign development has taken place) or as members of companies, even, throughout the country; the constitutional provisions that any foreigner may be expelled from the country at the caprice of the president—all these give proof enough that the chief changes in the Constitution of 1917 are anti-foreign in import and in terms.

That this is largely the result of the psychology of fear is illustrated with peculiar force by a conversation between an American and a Mexican friend. The question of American "unfairness" toward Mexico's national aims was being discussed, when the American asked:

"What would you do if Guatemala were making such demands upon your country?"

"Ah, Guatemala," replied the Mexican. "We

[1] Francisco Bulnes, "The Whole Truth about Mexico," New York, 1916, pages 103 *et seq.*

would just turn about and mash little Guatemala into the ground."

But for the United States he had only impotent rage and the retaliation of studied annoyances.

The Mexican attitude is patently that of the conscious weakling. He resents, more than anything else, the manifestations of what he deems a sense of superiority in the American and in other foreigners. This is the attitude of the Mexican in the group to-day, but it has not always been so. Under Diaz the feeling toward foreigners (even while the fear of intervention was nurtured) was that they should be encouraged to bring their enterprise and their capital into Mexico for the purpose of building that firm basis of material prosperity to which Diaz looked so steadily.

In that time, the foreigner was welcomed, and if he received more generous opportunity than elsewhere, it was considered vital to offer him such opportunity in order to bring him to Mexico. It was recognized in that day that such native capital as existed "results from exorbitant profits and not from the importance of capital."[1] The profits of any investment in the country were bound to be large. The idea of Diaz was to harness this economic condition to the importation of the capital Mexico needed so much. His policy doubtless looked forward to a day when the increase of money available for investment should bring about the amelioration of the entire economic fault. And actually, when he was driven out of office millions

[1] Report of the Mexican Minister of Fomento, 1885, page ix.

of foreign money were being invested in public service enterprises returning minor interest, and the bonds of the Mexican nation had been changed from questionable securities "worth" some twenty per cent. annually on the quotations to solid investments netting the purchaser less than five per cent. All this had raised the Mexican high in the estimation of the outside world, so that there was relatively little of the patronage from foreigners which he so much resented.

This spirit of patronage has returned, and with it a national feeling of spite and bitter hatred toward foreigners which is one of the important facts of the present era. It has already resulted in poisoning the individual mind of the Mexicans toward the individual foreigners whom they once liked—even if they also feared and resented, a little, their success and abilities. In the industrial belt, and particularly in the oil fields, the increasing numbers of new-come foreigners has reduced the once ample leaven of understanding foreign individuals who first carved their way into the Mexican jungle and into friendship with the Mexicans. But even there, when there is understanding, and above all where there is dignity in the attitude of the foreigner, the Mexican still responds with respect and with friendship. Outside the circles where socialistic and radical propaganda are active, most of the natives are still friendly toward individual foreigners.

The attitude of other days and the potential attitude of to-day is that the foreigners bring to the individual Mexican the opportunity to gain a better

livelihood, and a development of the country which means his greater personal comfort. Toward the end of the time of Diaz, the number of Mexican laborers who went across the American border for periods of work in mines, on farms and on the railways was growing, and the news of the good pay and comfortable living was filtering back throughout Mexico. No American employer of those days was surprised, when he talked with his peons, to find himself expected to answer many questions of this sort:

"When is it, *Señor*, that you Americans are coming down to take Mexico and pay us all three pesos a day for work like this, which we now must do for fifty centavos?"

To-day, and without American intervention, thousands of these peons are receiving such pay for the work they do for foreign companies, and in the oil fields, at least, a fair imitation of the "American standard of living" has become general. It is doubtful indeed if those who plan an expulsion of foreign companies through the nationalization of properties would find an enthusiastic welcome even at the hands of the thoroughly unionized workers for foreign companies. These workers, under the inspiration of radical agitators, make it a habit to demand many things which, if they were sure their demands would be acted upon literally, would never be heard of.

In the higher realms of Mexican life, where business questions are more closely followed than by laborers or radical agitators or government bureaucrats, there is still another important attitude. The

utter dependence of Mexico upon the outside world for her whole economic life (not to mention the vast export taxes on oil and minerals which support the government), is recognized by these men just as it is recognized by the foreign tradesmen who deal with them. The result is that this great substantial element in Mexico is opposed, definitely, to the anti-foreign movement in government, and suffers consciously from the foreign distrust of Mexico which shortens their credit and increases their business problems as a result.

To placate this element the Obregon government inaugurated the system of offering foreign trade, not the rights which it should seek through more conventional laws than those fathered by the Constitution of 1917, but privileges under those laws. The whole system of encouraging foreign investment and foreign trade at that time was based on the stated willingness of the Mexican governing group to wink at its own laws and to give foreigners the privilege of violating their letter and spirit. This was a breaking away from the hard and fast control of business which the radical laws provided, but it had not yet reached the era of true welcome to foreign enterprise,—as those who accepted the privileges learned to their discomfort. The government still controlled the privilege and exacted a continuing tribute of support.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Wallace Thompson, "Trading With Mexico," Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1921. The idea of privilege *vs.* rights is there developed further than can be done here. The book discusses the revolutionary and business conditions in Mexico phase by phase, especially in the light of this principle of privilege *vs.* rights.

Underneath all these subterfuges, however, exists a very genuine willingness to accept the foreigner at his own valuation, to work for him or with him in full and genial accord. Even in the most heated period of Mexican-American antagonism, during the war of 1847–1849, the mass of the people found the invading Americans thoroughly honest and decent folk. One of the amusing stories told in Monterey is of the scurrying of the native population to the hills when the Americans took possession of the town,—and their return three days later in droves, to sell the soldiers their chickens, eggs and the native delicacies which they had cooked for the promising traffic.

At the time of the landing of American troops in Vera Cruz in 1914, the Americans in Mexico City were treated with extreme courtesy by President Heurta. Many were approached by their Mexican friends, who offered them asylum in their own homes, with the understanding that when the American army reached the capital, the Americans should return the protection in kind! In fact, in the course of investigations made by American agents throughout Mexico during the Great War, the reports were almost unanimous in their indication that the Mexicans would be far from hostile, as individuals, to American control of their country pending the pacification which even then seemed hopeless at the hands of the Mexican rulers of that day.

The Mexican attitude toward foreigners has, indeed, most important psychological significance,

but it can be summed up in two phrases: The Mexicans as a group fear and expect foreign intervention and hate foreigners for the superiority which that possibility indicates; as individuals the Mexicans like and appreciate the qualities of foreigners, and actually welcome them and their development of the country.

Upon the latter attitude much solid progress can be built. Under the rule of radical socialists and syndicalists there has been a most unpromising strengthening of the group-fear, and the nationalization of the property of foreigners has all but come into actuality. That attitude, however, seems definitely to be without a solid foundation in individual Mexican psychology, and so, we must believe, is destined to pass away completely. The great friendly spirit of the Mexican people as a whole, their willingness to be led and to be educated by foreigners, remains. When it is used with due respect for the deep desires and traditions of the Mexican heart, this feeling can indeed be counted upon to aid in the working out of the regeneration of that unhappy land.

CHAPTER XII

THINGS DREAMED OF

THE whole sweep from horizon to horizon of the Mexican sky is to-day overcast with clouds, and those clouds have seemed to occupy most of the pages of this study. Let us seek, now, to reach our way through them, to brush them aside so far as we may, to look on the purer blue, if blue it be, that is behind them.

The national ideals, the things statesmen strive for and soldiers die for, and mothers nurture in the minds of their children! These are indeed the heights of aspiration, in whatever age we live, whatever language we speak, to whatever philosophy we may pin our faith. Patriotism is, to the average man the world around, the first and often the greatest of the disinterested passions, at once the fact and the fountainhead of national idealism.

Whether we march to the tunes of ancient anthems of glorious death for king and country, or to the reckless rhythms of modern socialism, patriotism is the name by which we call our passion and the hope which we summon to quiet our fears.

Thus Mexican patriotism is and must be the great, the unalloyed criterion of the nation's

idealism. And so we find it, for the patriotism of Mexico is a patriotism of the soil, a love for the land itself which is expressed in a devotion which is truly and simply beautiful. It was this sort of patriotism which made great the life of Elizabethan England, and which colors the life of England to this day. The love of the Englishman for his picturesque villages, for the rolling landscape of the south, for the mountains of the northland, for the white cliffs of Devon or the sloping shores of Wales, —to this deep, inbred patriotism is comparable the love of the Mexican for his "*tierra.*" This is the individual patriotism of the Mexican, an individual love for the particular plot of ground where he was born or grew or loved. In the last analysis this catlike attachment to the soil is the basic and permanent form of the patriotism of Mexico. The Mexican soldier lays down his life simply and gladly, indeed, for the defense of his home village, even if he is not so sentimental about the defense of his whole country. And no more beautiful picture will ever be painted than the sight of a peon woman, shrouded in her black shawl, trudging weary, dusty miles under the glaring sun, sometimes for days on end, so that she may give birth to her child in a deserted hut which still marks her "*tierra*", the identical place of her birth and her growing years.

Limited such a patriotism is, sentimental indeed, but because it is firm, because it is the one subject in all the range of thought, almost, that a Mexican will not ridicule, the love of the "*tierra*" seems a worthy beginning for the building of a yet broader

patriotism of the "*patria*", or fatherland. For the idea of the "*tierra*" is distinctly narrow and narrowing as well, perhaps. One Mexican student of his own people has written his great indignation over the fact that products from Central Mexico are regarded as "foreign", along with English and American manufactures, by the natives of the distant State of Yucatan. These "minute fatherlands" are regarded with scorn and apprehension by many of the observers of Mexico, Mexicans as well as foreigners. But because in all the shifting sands of Mexican psychology, above all in the treacherous morass of Mexican politics and government, these tiny plots of solid earth, sowed deep with the sentiment and faith of the people, should rather be accepted with joy and enthusiasm than feared as an element of disintegration.

Far more dangerous, and worthy of much more apprehension, is the lack of interest in and love for the traditions, for the history, for the true achievement of the Mexican people. Mexican patriotism can hardly be expected to be a patriotism of ideas and ideals, because of the relatively low plane of the mass of the people. It can, indeed, hardly be expected to be a patriotism of leaders, for the flair for the leader of to-day is sure to die down to-morrow and be gone the day that follows. It could not safely be a patriotism of race, for that would be disintegrating indeed. But it could well be and indeed some day must be a love and reverence for the institutions of her history and of her highest ambitions in government, art and taste. And this

it is not yet, and cannot be imagined to be, by the broadest stretch of faith.

The loyalty to one's origins, the respect for one's national traditions, the nurturing of the monuments of stone and on canvas and paper, of the great men of one's country, the wholesome, unquestioning support of the great movements and great institutions of one's government,—these are the ultimate of patriotism. And to this Mexico must yet attain, as the patriotism of Elizabethan England which was manifested in the love for tiny bits of England has grown to be a love of all England, a love of the institutions of Britain, a love, indeed, of the idea and the institution that have made the Dominions as true a bit of England as her hills themselves. Could Drake's sailors have dreamed of such an England, of such a patriotism? No more can the Mexican peon mother, trudging her way along the road to her "*tierra*" with hardly the ghost of a thought to explain her instinct to herself—no more can she—or we—see in her instinct the beginnings of a patriotism that will perhaps some day be great and true.

To-day Mexico is busy tearing to shreds the last patches of the civilization which the Spaniard built for her and Diaz crystallized to modern living for her. To-day her revolutionaries are casting away the last vestiges of her national strength,—her national entity. She has lost her arts and her song, and still the holocaust goes on. Perhaps the vandals will destroy everything that is beautiful and aspiring, to the very foundations of her towering

churches. But this will remain, this first and last thing, the love of the earth that bore them. And upon that and perhaps upon that alone will be built at last a Mexico that is worthy of the wonderful land which has borne her sons and which they love, and worthy of the mighty heritages which have come down through all the winding streams of past history to the morass that is to-day.

It is perhaps because of this kinship for the soil, this spirit of long loving of the tiny *tierras*, that the so-called land question or "agrarian problem" has assumed such astonishing proportions in the Mexican national psychology. It seems as if indeed the outburst of savage greed which revolutionary doctrines have so complicated as to make the providing of private farms for all the peons of Mexico the most outstanding of all the national "ideals" would never be quieted until it is resolved on the basis of its psychological pathology. Twelve years of bloody revolutionary orgy have had their mainspring in the assertion of the leaders that the land must be returned to the Indians who originally owned it. The battles of those twelve years have been fought by peon and Indian soldiers whose guerdon has been a promise of land (and considerable loot). Alberto J. Pani, a faithful follower of Carranza until his decline and then a follower of Obregon, decided that the patriotism of Mexico had two deep roots, the most important being the "ownership direct or indirect of the land." The second root, race, tradition, customs, language and perhaps religion could not, he felt, replace the former, and

"until this craving for land is appeased it would be immoral to educate the Indian so as to bring home to him with greater force his hopeless condition. A community which does not suffer from poverty seeks culture spontaneously."[1]

Certainly this revolutionary doctrine is psychological, for it is pure theory, but a theory upon which has been initiated and developed one of the most destructive revolutions of history. Proof enough there is, and from Mexican minds as well as from printed philosophies, that older and wiser students (even among the progressive factions) are not so sure that the holding of unearned property is the first step in progress from the savage plane toward civilization.

The history of Mexico itself contains an astonishing proof of the ineffective results which may come from too liberal a hand with the ignorant members of the group. For, strange as it may seem to the average foreign student, the loss of the communal lands of the Mexican Indians—the "wrong" for whose righting so much blood has been spilled in the past decade—came from the very thing which the revolution of Carranza so enthusiastically advocated; that is, from land distribution. Under Juarez, the Indian president of Mexico, the Laws of Reform were enacted, giving the Indian, along with other things, the right to dispose of the communal lands, with the result that he promptly did

[1] *Cf.* Alberto J. Pani, "Hygiene in Mexico, a Study of Sanitary and Educational Problems." Translation of Ernest L. Gorgoza, New York, 1917.

dispose of them. They were sold, in large pieces and in small, and the money spent. The Indians, fully ninety-five per cent. of whom were illiterates, were given the property of which Mr. Pani speaks, and because their minds were incapable of handling the responsibility, the property was easily taken from them by those who, in every land, can and do take advantage of weakness and ignorance. There is no desire or need to excuse those who took the land; the fact was a fact of policy, a policy of generous desire to help the Indians and give them what they wanted. But like many policies of generosity, it worked without the slightest recognition of Indian ignorance and greed, and because the control had passed beyond their hands, the officers of government could do nothing.

And now the plan is to take, by nationalization, vast tracts of cultivated land, to "give back" to the Indians the communes which under the Laws of Reform they were allowed to sell, and actually did sell,—to give them, again, tracts of land in their own right to cultivate as they were given their communal lands half a century ago. It is, indeed, simply the *reductio ad absurdum* of the socialistic ideal, the carrying out, in actual life, of the humorous story of the socialist who, when asked what would happen after the distribution of all property equally had worked around, as it inevitably would, to a new concentration in the hands of the powerful, answered, "Oh, then we would have another distribution."

Reduced to its psychological principle, this is

what the Mexican is doing to-day. And because socialism is fashionable at the moment, he is finding powerful support among the radical circles of the entire world. But that support does not, unfortunately for him, alter the immutable facts of human nature.

The imagination of the outsider is juggled into an unappraising endorsement of these pitiful, childish plans for the amelioration of the unhappy condition of the peons. Before him is set the picture of peonage, with its attendant evils, the misery and poverty and debility that are its accompaniments. But he misses one illuminating fact which Mexicans usually do not discuss and foreigners seldom realize. This is that the actual origin of most of the so-called slavery is this same ghastly falsehood of relationship, this disparity between the facts of the law and the operation of the law. Such slavery, such forced labor as exists, is a result of the psychological and legal irresponsibility of the peon, which invites and seems to demand that those who deal with him take matters into their own hands. Under the customs of peon life, the worker borrows money—his advances run, sometimes, into the hundred of pesos. To recover these advances the employer finds he has no legal recourse and so takes extra-legal methods, and forces the peon to work out the debt, with the purchased connivance of the local authorities.

It was literally possible in the time of Diaz, and it is probably easier to-day, for an Indian, as a messenger, to carry off and sell a typewriter worth

two hundred and fifty pesos, and the defrauded tradesman and the Indian's employer would have no civil recourse whatever. But the same peon, if employed on an hacienda, could be held in "slavery" for four years to work out a debt of a third the value of the typewriter. Thus the legal situation in Mexico, the lack of harmony between the facts of Mexican psychology and education and the nature of the laws with which the land is governed is a continual invitation, to the peon on the one hand to employ all his small wits in schemes to defraud his employers, and for the employers on the other hand to devise all means, legal and otherwise, to keep his peons in debt and at work.

These facts the Mexicans know well, and yet these same ignorant, unfortunate Indians and peons, who can neither read nor write, ostensibly have the power to vote and are ostensibly the beneficiaries of all sorts of modern schemes of socialization. Yet in all the history of Mexico, with all her endless revolutions and all her great upheavals, there has never been an honest effort (by a revolutionary body) to change the fundamental, ill-adapted laws which are at the root of the national difficulties. Even Diaz, with all his wisdom, did not work effectively to prepare, by education, for a democracy which would replace the condition which made his untimately destructive methods necessary.

We must admire Diaz broadly for the fact that he met the conditions which he found, faced them and used them for the building of his peace and progress, but we cannot forget that when he had done that

he did not go on to the creation of that new generation,—the generation that should to-day be in the saddle of Mexican government in place of the puny Maderos, the pompous Carranzas and the demagogic Obregons. Diaz, for all his sincere interest and almost pitiful hopes for education, was not an educator, and he gathered few true educators about him. The fault may have been with his time and with the methods which men followed in that time; but the fault itself remains.

In his thirty years of rule Diaz saw nearly fifteen million Mexican children grow from infancy to their early maturity; virtually the entire population of the country was renewed completely under his rule. He saw them born, he saw them die like flies in early infancy; he saw the winnowed wheat of the bitter physical survival grow into eager childhood; he saw incipient geniuses arise, in music and in leadership of their tiny fellows; he saw some two million of these go to his schools; he saw them taught in the loudly shouted chorus of the Mexican classroom; he saw their childhood pass into early adulthood, and the precious moment of awakening pass and disappear; he saw the girls blossom to women and the boys grow to youth, with the whole force of their vital, mental and psychic energy turned to sensuality; he saw the women fade to ugly hags, the youths to dull and stupid manhood, their only vitality the plunging of themselves, and in the end their country, into debilitating excesses.

Diaz can be forgiven by those of us who watch to-day, but the times cannot be forgiven, and the

long dull ignorance which has let this ghastly wasting of childhood go on for all the centuries and, worst of all, continue into this day of light and progress,—that ignorance cannot be forgiven. Only in this was the terrible mistake made, that the moment when the instincts of the searching man reached the transition stage of ripening was never caught and used. The Mexican child, struggling unaided to the highest summit of his personal and group consciousness, the awakening to the mysteries of sex, the age of romance and eagerness, of keenest curiosity and most vivid imagination, has been guided, not by wise teachers or parents, but by the brute, unsocial group instincts which have came up through him and his fellows in the long heritage from the animal world. These instincts and these alone have been clamped upon the back of each and every Mexican child and have crystalized into the traditions which make his life.

This "law of transiency", the fact that the flitting immanence of the awakening comes to every child at some certain moment and passes forever if it is not caught and used to its utmost, takes heavy toll from its neglect in Mexico. That neglect has made the dull, sodden history of the past and the terrible chaos of the present.

So we find our way back again to the vital subject of education, the beacon of human progress, the very essence of all the hope and of all the failure of Mexico. We wander far afield, indeed, and many times we lose our way, but always, around the rocks, just beyond this shallow or that

ugly promontory, we glimpse that beacon. It stands in Mexico to-day, its light dimmer than at any time in all her modern history; but its foundations go deep into the souls of those twelve million unlettered and untrained natives,—the "eighty five per cent." of the population.

All through Mexican history, the leaders of the country have sought for other channels than that pointed by this ancient lighthouse. Always the national energy has been directed to the search for the easier way, the more spectacular way, the prouder way. And through each succeeding experiment the light has burned dimmer, the precious moment of transciency has gathered new and uglier heritages. Education has dimmed and faded.

Even Madero, who truly believed in education, wrote, before he attained to the presidency, "We do not believe that the ignorant masses of the population are a hindrance to democracy."[1] Madero blamed the evils of Mexico on militarism and the innumerable reëlections of President Diaz. Yet the son of Miguel Lerdo de Tejada (the friend of Juarez and one of the earlier presidents of Mexico) wrote in 1916, long after Madero was laid in his grave:

> The bitter conclusion is that the greatest single obstacle which has prevented Mexican realization of her desires for democracy is the lack of civilization and culture—the problem of nations' education.[2]

[1] Francisco I. Madero, "La Sucesion Presidencial en 1910," page 135.

[2] Trejo Lerdo de Tejada, "La Revolucion y el Nacionalismo," Havana, 1916, page 116.

The questions of the methods and means of Mexican education need not enter here, but there is a yet greater phase which does lie definitely within the province of this book. It reaches into the heart of the Mexican psychology, and it gives a ray of hope to all who believe, despite appearances, that there is salvation for the Mexicans from within themselves. That phase is the "socialization" of the Mexicans.[1]

In a previous chapter[2] there was brief discussion of the long climb of humanity up the ladder of development from beast self-assertion and the fear régime through the higher planes of group consciousness, economic consciousness and social consciousness. There it was shown that in actuality the Mexican as a class has so far emerged to little beyond the very beginnings of the plane where the compelling hungers are for wealth and power and place. He has not yet developed even the hunger for knowledge, and the plane of true ideals and feeling, the plane of socialized will and the plane of God-consciousness, have hardly been dreamed of by any but an infinitesimal minority.

In the question of education we face, primarily, the problem of awakening in the Mexican mind, first of all the hunger for knowledge, and then the hungers which transcend knowledge in the scale. It is the attainment of these four higher planes

[1] The author is again indebted to his old master, Daniel Moses Fisk, for the fundamental principles of this dynamic idea of socialization. They are set forth in his printed notes on "Socialization", Topeka, 1920.

[2] Chapter IX, The Mexican Crowd, pages 207 *et seq.*

which constitute the "socialization" of the individual in the group.

To most of us, education means merely the awakening of the hunger for knowledge and the satisfying of that hunger to a greater or a lesser degree. From the point of this recognition, we pass usually without more formality into the discussion of systems of education and the need of funds.

But the education which must come to Mexico must be planned on a far broader scale. It must include not only letters and figures, the stocking of the peon mind with the ability to read his ballot and add his accounts with the company store. The problem has been lifted far beyond that plane by the vital necessities of the world about him and by the very prostitution of the shibboleths of all the great social hungers in the mouths of demagogues and charlatans. The pressure upon Mexico from without is mightier than the pressure upon any other of the backward peoples of the whole world. The problems of Mexico, of the government, of the business organization, of the people and of their psychology must be settled, and settled forthwith and together. The world will not wait, and the progress of humanity will not wait.

But here light dawns. From the plane of knowledge-hunger upward the social forces blossom together and together march upon their way. When, in the dim recesses of the animal mind, we awakened, ages ago, to the consciousness of our group

life, we laid the beginnings of socialization. Group life such as exists in Mexico is largely unsocial; it is a form of selfishness, of individualism. The primary need of the Mexican social structure is for the realization of the interpendence of the individual units of the nation. This is vital and imperative, and the road to such a realization must be found. Materialism in Mexico has failed, as it had to fail, because the world men live in is a world of men and not a world of things. A world of pure knowledge is a force in the Mexican, yet with all his intellect (on whatever social and mental plane he may live) he argues in sophistries and drives the whole of his great or little psychic force to the stimulation and the gratification of his animal emotions.

But science and religion hold out a promise of a leap to the true social plane, a leap from the firm ground of that almost savage group life, of that utterly animal sex life, into the realm of social consciousness. That sex life is the strongest element in the Mexican psychology, and its mightiest ally for social advancement is in the fact that is patent to all who see,—that the Mexican child before the age of puberty is quicker, more active, keener, perhaps, than the average child of other dark races. His combined ancestry serves him well until, in the moment of change from childhood to adulthood, the whole force of his life is switched away from mere living and growing into the plane where sex rules supreme in the mind as well as in the body.

Now this change to adolescence is the moment, as well, when the child of kindlier heritage and calmer traditions awakens to his social place and achieves, if he achieves it at all, that change of heart from himself to a higher plane which the Churches call conversion. Heretofore the educational system of Mexico, and indeed the Church system, has neglected that great moment. The crisis of education from the psychological viewpoint is the determining and the taking advantage of the critical moment in the mind when the child is most teachable. It seems that, because this moment comes years before it comes to other races, it has never been truly determined in the Mexican child. Because it has not, both boys and girls reach the very peak of their teachability and are well on the slip downward to the animal plane to which they were born before their teachers have begun the process of sublimating those awakening forces to the making of the new mind which education seeks.

The problem is tremendous in any case, but if, in the course of the years to come, the Mexican government or some foreign organization equipped for the great work will consent to devote itself to the study, not of educational systems, but of the Mexican child, it seems as if it might be that the primary problem of the education of Mexico might be solved. The precious moments are being lost, year after year and in child after child, so that even the pitifully few thousands who are educated in Mexico get their education too soon or too late. The lift over the almost bottomless pit of

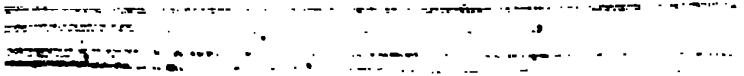
age-old degeneracy of mind and emotion is all but beyond hope, but this one study may mean the removal of the one handicap that will make the leap possible.

Perhaps in this we ask for the millennium, and for a system of education beyond that which prevails even in our own lands. But there are such forces, such organizations as are here suggested, capable of making the great survey of the Mexican child mind, of the Mexican physical cycle, which are the bases of such a regenerate educational system. Such an ideal is not utopian, but extremely practical; it could be carried through with a competent staff in two years, and the new system of education evolved at least to a testing-out basis within another year. The difficulty is not with the means but with the material itself, the Mexican mind with all its unexpected facets, all its unplumbed depths.

The effort in these pages has been to show—what seems increasingly evident—that we cannot classify the Mexican mind by any criteria which we yet know. And yet we foreigners have been continually trying so to classify it, and the Mexicans themselves are forever classifying everything. The call seems to be for a study of the individual, in his solitude and in his group reactions—for always he is an individual and not a socialized unit—and from that the creation of a basic standard, new to us as to the Mexicans, from which to start. Thus and thus only will we find the way to turn his blind search for personal satisfactions, animal, economic and political,into a noble quest for the welfare of the

social whole toward which Mexico is struggling with such pitiful results.

And when the way is found—that way which seems so far distant to their minds and to ours to-day—when that way is found, there is waiting for the harness that one deep, true, and beautiful emotion, the love of the land they live in, to be turned into a force of regeneration and of creation for the benefit not of Mexico and the Mexicans alone, but of the world as well.



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